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STARS AND STRIPES

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US ambassador openly questions Afghan leaders over corruption

By Cara Anna and Rahim Faiez
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The United States ambassador to Afghanistan on Thursday openly questioned the Afghan government's commitment to fighting corruption after reports that a key figure in a massive banking scandal received an early prison release in return for a large campaign donation.

Ambassador John Bass' comments came after local media reports alleged that former Kabul Bank chief executive Khalilullah Ferozi was released into house arrest after a $30 million donation to President Ashraf Ghani's election campaign.

Presidential spokesman Sediq Seddiqi told The Associated Press that those reports are "a big lie" and said Ferozi was transferred into house arrest because of his deteriorating health.

The U.S. comments further strain relations with the Afghan government as a U.S. envoy and the Taliban near a deal to end America's longest war. The talks have excluded Ghani's government as the Taliban describe it as a U.S. puppet.

"To be honest, I'm very sad to see this," Seddiqi said of the ambassador's comments posted on Twitter.

The Kabul Bank scandal in 2010 drew global headlines and became a test of the Afghan government's ability and willingness to address widespread corruption. The country's largest private bank nearly collapsed, and Ferozi and chairman Sherkhan Farnood were sent to prison and told to repay more than $800 million.

Farnood recently died in prison, and Ghani's spokesman said the president approved Ferozi's transfer into house arrest after the judiciary system looked into his health.

SEE CORRUPTION ON PAGE 2



Patriotism or protest?

Army vet Jimi Hendrix defined Woodstock with his performance of 'Star-Spangled Banner' **Page 10**

Jimi Hendrix plays at the Woodstock Music & Art Fair on Aug. 18, 1969.
Henry Diltz/Corbis via Getty Images

Earthquakes caused up to $5 billion in damage to California naval base

By Alejandra Reyes-Velarde
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — Two months after twin earthquakes rocked the small California towns of Ridgecrest and Trona, details are emerging about the damage done to the nearby China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, the Navy's largest base for developing and testing weapons of warfare.

The base was so badly damaged that officials are suggesting several buildings be demolished and replaced. The cost of returning the facilities to normal could top $5 billion, according to Navy documents.

The recommendations still have to be approved by Congress and President Donald Trump, according to Lee Saunders, a spokesman for the Southwest division of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command.

The China Lake naval station is less than 10 miles from the epicenters of the Ridgecrest quakes that rocked the region on July 4 and July 5. The base was open only to essential personnel after the first earthquake, a magnitude 6.4. But following the larger 7.1 temblor, the facility was evacuated.

Two weeks after the quakes, the base told personnel in a Facebook post that building use remained limited and many services had been relocated. Information about damage to the base has been sparse since.

"A degree of normalcy has outwardly returned to the Western Mojave Desert," the social media post said. "Nevertheless, restoration and repair of infrastructure and facilities diligently continues throughout the installation."

Naval engineers have worked to repair facilities on the base so employees and their families could return, but according to a report this week in the Navy Times, the base has still not been deemed "fully mission capable."

SEE BASE ON PAGE 2

MILITARY

Base: Many of damaged buildings not up to standard

FROM FRONT PAGE

The latest report shows that officials assessed all buildings, utilities and facilities — 3,598 structures in all — for 13 days after the earthquakes and found damage totaled $5.2 billion. Replacing buildings alone would cost $2.2 billion, but officials also must replace or repair specialized equipment, furniture, machine tools, telecommunication assets and other facilities, the document shows.

Capt. Mark Edelson, a commanding officer for the Naval Facilities Engineering Command's Southwest division, could not immediately be reached for comment, but he told the Navy Times this week that more than half of the base's damaged buildings were built before 1980 and did not meet seismic standards.

The base's Hangar 3, which holds advanced weaponry and aircraft, suffered structural cracking.

The Michelson Laboratory, which houses a unit that tests advanced weapons technology, was declared unsafe after major cracks and other signs of "stress" were found in its foundation, columns and beams, the Navy Times reported.

Corruption: Afghan official dismisses claim of donation

FROM FRONT PAGE

The move was a "humanitarian act" and one to help ensure that Ferozi would stay alive to repay the hundreds of millions of dollars, Seddiqi said.

He dismissed the idea of a campaign donation by Ferozi, saying that "if he had this much money, he would have" repaid it as required.

Ferozi has less than a year left in his sentence, Seddiqi said.

The U.S. ambassador said he was "disturbed" by allegations first raised this week by presidential candidate and former national intelligence chief Rahmatullah Nabil.

"Countless Afghans suffered in the past decade because international assistance funds were stolen for personal gain," the ambassador said.

Washington's Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, which monitors billions of dollars in U.S. aid to the country, said in a report earlier this year that Afghanistan may not be ready for peace unless it finds a way to reintegrate Taliban fighters into society and combat "endemic corruption."



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Invasion anniversary

On the 75th anniversary of Operation Dragoon, the World War II invasion of southern France, veteran Allan Johnson stands among the graves at Rhone American Cemetery in Draguignan, France, and pays his respects to Pvt. Henry Wikins, a fellow member of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat team.

Group claiming to be military charity closed

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring says a company has been shut down after it claimed it to be a charity that sent care packages to U.S. servicemembers overseas.

Herring's office said in a statement Wednesday that the company was Hearts 2 Heroes based out of Bunker Hill, W.Va. It did business as Active Duty Support Services and sold care packages door-to-door.

The state filed suit against the company claiming it wasn't a charity and that its staff skimmed donations for themselves. The AG's office alleged that the care packages went undelivered or to stateside military bases.

Herring's office said the company closed as part of a legal settlement. Virginia had led a multi-state investigation. The state filed suit on behalf of Virginians who were affected.

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MILITARY

More training in S. Pacific likely

Expert: Concerns about China's moves in region likely motivation for US drills

By Seth Robson
Stars and Stripes

Concerns about Chinese efforts to build influence in the South Pacific will likely spur more exercises like one involving the U.S. Army in Fiji this month, according to a regional security expert.

One hundred and fifty troops from Company B, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment wrapped up two weeks of training alongside the Republic of Fiji Military Forces' 3rd Infantry Regiment on Monday.

Exercise Cartwheel was the first time that such a large force of U.S. soldiers had trained on the island, said U.S. Army Pacific spokesman Maj. Kelly Haux.

"This is the first time we have had a company-sized U.S. Army element train with Fijian military forces," he said.

The troops practiced marksmanship and urban and jungle operations during events designed to enhance the Fijians' capability and ability to operate with U.S. forces, Haux said in a telephone interview Thursday.

There were also visits to primary schools where civil affairs soldiers told the kids about hygiene and healthy eating and donated class materials, he said.

The training is part of the Army's Pacific Pathways initiative, which involves numerous exercises in the region each year, according to information provided by the Army.

U.S. forces have trained in the South Pacific in the past, but the engagements are likely to increase as America and allies such as Australia respond to Chinese efforts to build influence there, according to Carl Baker, executive director of the Pacific Forum think tank on Hawaii.

"The Australians have been experiencing a great deal of angst over what's happening in the South Pacific," he said.

Chinese influence operations in the region, which have included donations to politicians and financing infrastructure projects in small island nations, have caught the attention of officials in Australia and New Zealand, and concerns were raised last year that the communists might want to establish military bases in the South Pacific.



Whitney Houston/U.S. Army

Army Staff Sgt. Clinton Danforth trains with his Fijian army counterparts earlier this month in Savusavu, Fiji. Exercise Cartwheel ended Monday.

In response, the U.S. and its allies have re-engaged with Fiji, Baker said.

The nation is led by Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, former commander of the Fijian military, who came to power in 2007 after a series of coups.

Fiji is the only South Pacific nation of its size with a capable military, thanks to its participating in United Nations peacekeeping missions, Baker said.

Concerns about Chinese influence will mean more engagements like Exercise Cartwheel, he said.

"It's a way to show U.S. commitment," he said.

"You can see it as a potential hedge against [the Chinese military's] engagement in the region. The U.S. can say, 'We were here first, and we are really your allies and we will help defend your country.'"

New Zealand's army tweeted Thursday that U.S. Marines are joining Kiwi troops in Tonga for Exercise Tafakula this week.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command did not immediately provide details of the event.

However, Baker said that military engagement isn't a great fit with small South Pacific states, which don't have much military capability other than coast guards.

"The U.S. sends its military but clearly what the Pacific states really want is social welfare assistance," he said.

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Head of Navy medical facility fired; loss of confidence cited

By Carlos M. Vazquez II
Stars and Stripes

The Navy's head of Naval Medicine Operational Training Center, headquartered in Pensacola, Fla., has been relieved of his duties as commanding officer.

Capt. Theron Toole was removed by Rear Adm. Tina Davidson, commanding officer of Navy Medicine Education, Training and Logistics Command, on Tuesday "due to a loss of confidence in his ability to command," U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery spokeswoman Angela Steadman told Stars and Stripes via email Thursday.

The center trains approximately 18,000 personnel annually in operational medical and aviation survival training, with six detachments on the U.S. East and West Coasts — including 16 training sites, according to the center's website.

The command oversees the medical training of Navy and Marine Corps special operation forces, expeditionary units, submarine forces and aviation units operating throughout the world, according to its website.

Toole will be reassigned to a position within Navy Medicine Education, Training and Logistics Command and will be replaced by the center's deputy commander, Capt. Timothy Richardson, who will "serve as interim commanding officer until a permanent commanding officer is identified," Steadman said.



Toole

Richardson became deputy commander of the center in April 2019, according to his online biography.

No additional details surrounding the relief were released as of Thursday.

Toole, of Chicago, was commissioned a lieutenant in the Navy Reserve in 1989, two years after receiving his medical degree from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn., according to his biography on the center's website.

He completed training in cardiovascular medicine and interventional cardiology fellowship at the University of Texas Health Science Center in 1993 and 1994, and was recalled to active duty in August 2004.

He has served deployments as the senior medical officer aboard the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and as a wing surgeon for 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing in Afghanistan.

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Intruder shot, security forces member stabbed at Guam base

By Matthew M. Burke
Stars and Stripes

A civilian security forces member was stabbed Thursday morning at Andersen Air Force Base while attempting to apprehend an intruder fleeing from Guam police.

Information on the Defense Department civilian's condition and identity was not immediately available. Air Force officials said the intruder — who was also not named — was shot during the incident.

The fugitive was treated at a civilian hospital, Air Force officials said Thursday in a statement. Information on his condition was not available.

The incident began at 7:35 p.m. Wednesday when a civilian attempted to enter the base's main gate while fleeing from Guam Police, Air Force officials wrote on Andersen's Facebook page several hours after the incident began.

The intruder crashed his vehicle into emergency defensive barriers deployed by members of the 36th Security Forces Squadron following a high-speed chase. He then fled on foot.

The base was placed on lockdown "as a safety precaution," the Facebook post said. Security forces and local law enforcement secured the area. The "all clear" was issued sometime before 2 a.m. and normal base operations resumed.

The base's main gate was closed again Thursday morning after the fugitive was discovered at about 6:35 a.m. by security forces, the Air Force statement said. Officials did not say where he was found.

"During apprehension, the suspect responded aggressively and stabbed a Department of Defense civilian security forces member," the Air Force statement said. "The suspect was subsequently shot by base security during the altercation."

Air Force officials declined to comment further. Guam Police's public information officer did not answer several calls seeking further information Thursday.

Andersen's main gate will remain closed except for emergency personnel until further notice, a Facebook post Thursday morning said. Other gates remain open.

"Our top priority is to ensure the safety of Team Andersen, our service members and families," 36th Wing commander Air Force Brig. Gen. Gentry Boswell said in the statement. "We are proud of our partnerships in place and for the swift actions taken by our security forces members in conjunction with local law enforcement."

The incident remains under investigation by the Air Force Office of Special Investigation, Andersen security forces and Guam Police, the statement said.

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MILITARY

Ramstein offers base housing in exchange for child care services

By Jennifer H. Svan
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Ramstein is rolling out a first-of-its-kind program in the Air Force aimed at easing the chronic shortage of child care providers in the Kaiserslautern area.

This is how it will work: Military spouses who volunteer and qualify to be a family child care provider will move to the top of the waiting list for on-base housing.

In exchange, they'll sign a contract agreeing to provide child care of up to 50 hours a week per child, for up to six children, for at least 18 months.

Candidates will have to pass stringent background checks and complete up to 40 hours of training, among other requirements. Homes will be subject to safety, fire and public health inspections.

Under the program, announced this week, up to 10 new Family Child Care providers may be designated "key and essential" personnel and earn priority placement for military family housing on Landstuhl, Vogelweh and Ramstein, base officials said.

They'll be matched to available homes according to their spouse's military rank and number of command-sponsored dependents. They can request a base, though wait times are longest for Ramstein.

FCC candidates in the program can turn down the first base home offered but will lose their priority placement if they refuse a second time.

Senior officers in pay grades 0-6 and above and enlisted quarters for E-9s are not included.

"We're trying to develop this as an incentive for people to volunteer to help … get the mission done here," said Lt. Col. Kathryn M. Kilker, 86th Civil Engineer Squadron commander.

"That's why we're able to say this is 'key and essential' because it's mission needs so that we can take care of the families so people can go to work."

Base housing is an incentive in the Kaiserslautern military community, where only about 1,500 homes are on base, compared to about 12,000 in the area off base, officials said.

Families who are deployed overseas for the first time say they prefer on-base housing, said Heather Lewis, housing management assistance chief.

"A lot of them say that, with children, they like to be around other American kids and walk to school," she said.

Wait times for on-base housing vary by rank, housing type and base.

Ramstein has the longest wait time —more than two years for some categories.

Currently, there are only eight licensed FCC providers in the Kaiserslautern Military Community. All of those are off-base and at capacity, officials said.

"This is a test case," Kilker said. "We're going to see how this goes. We are the first … in the Air Force to do this."

FCC providers are particularly sought out by shift workers, who need care after hours when base child development centers are closed.

But the lack of day care in the largest U.S. military community overseas affects all families seeking child care.

Even families where both parents work and single-parent families aren't offered day care immediately, with wait times depending on a child's age and type of care needed, base officials said Thursday. Spaces on Ramstein are most in demand, they said.

Families a year ago described to Stars and Stripes some of the measures they've taken to find care so they could go to work, including taking their kids to the office or having a grandparent live with them.

At the time, there were more than 400 children on the Air Force and Army child care waiting lists in the community — 206 children on the Air Force CDC waiting list and 225 on the Army's list.

About 140 children are currently on the Air Force waitlist for child care, said Michael Simones, the CDC/FCC manager for the community.

The Army numbers were not immediately available.

Simones said child care programs are still recovering from the 90-day federal hiring freeze instituted in 2017 by President Donald Trump.

"It killed us because it included (non-appropriated fund workers)," Simones said. "It's taken us to this point to catch up."

The new program is the most recent effort by base officials to shrink wait times for child care, said Lt. Col. Natosha Reed, 86th Force Support Squadron commander.

The average hiring time for base child care workers has been reduced from two months to one and base officials recently created more than 90 school-age program spots by opening a building that had been shuttered for years.

Compounding the shortage of child care spaces on base are fewer opportunities for American children to attend public German day care centers.

A law passed in 2013 mandated that every child in Germany over the age of 1 has the legal right to child care.

While German day care centers can take Americans, even if they're given a lower priority than Germans, many in Kaiserslautern and surrounding areas choose not to do so.

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Program to help spouses prep for life after military

By Caitlin M. Kenney
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is rolling out a new program that provides military spouses resources to prepare them and their family for the time when their husband or wife transitions out of the military.

The Military Spouse Transition Program, or MySTeP, is an initiative that launched in early August through the Pentagon's Military Community and Family Policy office and provides military spouses information to help prepare them for the inevitability of their family leaving the military.

While servicemembers go through the Transition Assistance Program, or TAP, to prepare for their transition, military spouses have faced a lack of information about the transition, which causes a challenge for families, according to Eddy Mentzer, the associate director for children, youth, and families in Military Community and Family Policy office in the Defense Department's office of the undersecretary for personnel and readiness.

"And we recognize very seriously that when there's a family involved, the military spouse plays an equal role in the entire transition process," he said.

Pentagon officials realized about three years ago that there was an information and resources gap for spouses, Mentzer said. Though spouses can attend the TAP program, they found it was often difficult for families to find child care or to take time off from their jobs.

The program's team spoke to military spouses who had gone through a transition about what they wished they had done as a spouse to prepare them for eventually transitioning out of the military and what resources they wish they had once they left, Mentzer said. Some spouses mentioned how they wished when they were younger that they had developed better financial habits such as saving money. Mentzer said he also was interested to know how important networks were to them, for a career and personal support.

"So we want to educate them … that there are things they can do right now that they can take advantage of," he said.

The Pentagon developed the MySTeP program as a journey, with resources for the first day that they became a military spouse to the day that their husband or wife retires or separates. MySTeP is available on the Military OneSource website, a one-stop for programs and resources for military families through the Defense Department.

By having the program available online, spouses can access its information whenever and wherever they are.



VERNON YOUNG JR./U.S. Air Force

Jen Birkle celebrates her winning raffle ticket during the spouses business expo in May at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C. The Pentagon has a new program that provides spouses resources to prepare them for when their husband or wife leaves the military.

As part of the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program on Military OneSource, MySTeP is composed of three steps that focus on the different phases of being a military spouse: "Stepping In" is for new spouses, "Stepping Through" for ones who are familiar with military life, and "Stepping Beyond" for spouses about to transition back to civilian life with their husband or wife.

Videos for new spouses in the "Stepping In" section include finding employment help on the installation, locating financial support and assistance, and strengthening your social network with family readiness resources. The videos pop up with a sidebar consisting of links to resources discussed in the video.

For spouses who are familiar with military life, the "Stepping Through" section is composed mainly of articles on topics including relocation, employment, and health and wellness.

The MySTeP program website only has content now for the first two steps, not the last step for spouses transitioning. The program's team wanted to test and establish their methodology and way for delivering the resources to the spouses, Mentzer said, so they started with "Stepping In." But he said the most valuable resources will be the last step for spouses.

During the next 12 to 18 months, they will roll out content and develop another 170 videos for the program, according to Mentzer. Most of the marketing push for the program will start in September, but Mentzer said he is also hoping to have word of MySTeP spread in online communities for military spouses because it's "one of the most trusted resources for information."

Mentzer said he hopes the program will empower spouses by giving them the information and resources they need, and then it's up to the individual to "own it."

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MILITARY



BRANDON JACOBS/U.S. Army

Soldiers of the 92nd Military Police Company work with their German counterparts at the Hohenfels Training Area, Germany. Chancellor Angela Merkel has said the country must strive to improve its military.

Merkel says military must improve amid US moves

BY SLOBODAN LEKIC
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — German Chancellor Angela Merkel said her country must take "pains" to improve its armed forces amid U.S. threats to move American bases from Germany unless Berlin boosts defense spending.

Merkel played down U.S. diplomatic warnings about the possibility of relocating some of the roughly 35,000 troops in Germany to neighboring Poland.

"I think that the German (bases) are good locations for the American soldiers," she said after a meeting Wednesday with Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda, as cited by the German t-online news website.

"There are good reasons for the (U.S.) bases here in Germany but at the same time we know that we must take the pains to get the German military in better shape."

The German armed forces have come under sharp criticism in recent years for a steady decline in readiness, despite growing security threats from Russia and others.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticized NATO members, specifically Germany, for not stepping up to contribute more for the defense of the Continent.

Merkel appeared to be referring to a statement last Friday by U.S. Ambassador Richard Grenell, who said it was "actually offensive" that Washington had to pay to keep its forces based in Germany while Berlin failed to meet NATO's defense spending target of 2% of its gross domestic product.

Meanwhile, U.S. envoy to Poland Georgette Mosbacher last week suggested relocating U.S. troops from Germany to Poland, echoing earlier comments by Trump.

Grenell told the German dpa news agency that he agreed with Mosbacher.

Poland has offered to contribute up to $2 billion to construct a permanent U.S. base. The U.S. currently maintains troops in Poland only on a rotational basis.

Nevertheless, critics have said that a large-scale move from Germany could be expensive and disruptive. It would move U.S. troops from a country with a high-quality infrastructure where they have trained since the end of WWII.

Creating a network of permanent bases in Poland would require new roads, schools, shops and other facilities.

NATO's 2% of GDP defense spending target dates from 2014 when the Obama administration pushed through a statement pledging that NATO members would reach that goal within a decade.

On Tuesday, Merkel said Germany was moving to increase military spending. Its defense budget would grow to 1.41% of GDP by next year and 1.5% by 2020.

The center-right leader said that Germany was not violating NATO's defense spending agreement, as member countries agreed back then to lift defense spending "toward 2%."

"So this means in the direction of 2%, and we will continue to go in this direction also after 2024," Merkel said, as cited by Reuters.

Stars and Stripes reporter Marcus Kloeckner contributed to this report.
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File-sharing site is shuttered as DOD moves to new solution

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

Users will be unable to download material from a popular military file exchange service after Thursday, as the Defense Department transitions to a new site with larger capacity and better security.

Aviation and Missile Research, Development and Engineering Center Safe Access File Exchange, known as AMRDEC SAFE, had become a hub for transferring large files. A message on the site Thursday announced its end and directed visitors to the new site, DOD SAFE.

An AMRDEC temporary shutdown last year caused hiccups for military commands and government workers who had come to rely on it to handle sensitive unclassified information. Pentagon officials were forced to find an alternative.

"It was never intended to be the enterprise solution for DOD members that it turned into," Sophie Johnson-Shapoval, a computer engineer with the Defense Collaboration Service, said in a statement Thursday.

The Defense Information System Agency, which operates DOD SAFE "will bridge the capability gap as AMRDEC sunsets," said Carey Burris, project manager for the Defense Collaboration Service, as quoted in the statement.

Found online at https://safe.apps.mil/, DOD SAFE offers several improvements, including larger transfer sizes and end-to-end encryption.

"We're working with [the missile center's] team to transition between the two services, and our goal is to provide an even better service," Johnson-Shapoval said.

Originally developed for the Huntsville, Ala.-based R&D center, now known as U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center, AMRDEC SAFE was designed to allow government officials at Redstone Arsenal to exchange data with civilian industry partners.

It became the solution throughout DOD and other government agencies because it could handle information such as personnel and medical records, had the capacity for files significantly larger than allowed by encrypted email and could send messages to email addresses outside the military and government domains.

But it was shuttered in November after an unnamed government agency raised security concerns.

Though potential vulnerabilities were immediately remedied, it remained down until February "due to issues with sustainment and maintenance capabilities," the missile center said this week.

While the temporary loss of the site and the lack of alternatives highlighted the need for the service, officials said this week that the cost to maintain it had surpassed the center's ability to support it.

The new site, which is in a "beta" development stage, supports transfers of up to 8 gigabytes — four times larger than its predecessor — allows users to download files more than once, and lets them send up to 25 files at a time. Files are automatically deleted seven days after upload.

Government users on DOD SAFE can send files to anyone at any time, just as they could with the old site.

But users outside the government can only upload files in response to a request from a government user.

On the previous site, they could send packages on their own, as long as they were sent to military or government email addresses.

DOD SAFE also allows for "package-level encryption" to protect files both at the user's workstation and while they are in transit, the statement said.

"It's enhanced protection of data," said Jeanelle Holder, an electronics engineer with DISA's emerging technologies division.

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PACIFIC

Moon reaches out to Japan to end trade feud

By Kim Gamel
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — President Moon Jae-in offered an olive branch to Japan over the two countries' trade dispute on Thursday, while vowing to "solidify denuclearization and peace" on the Korean Peninsula before his term ends.

South Korea has accused Japan of economic retaliation against court rulings calling for Japanese companies to offer reparations for forced labor during its occupation of the peninsula that ended with World War II.

"If any country weaponizes a sector where it has a comparative advantage, the peaceful free trade order will inevitably suffer damages," Moon said in a speech marking the 74th anniversary of the end of Japanese rule.

"Better late than never: If Japan chooses the path of dialogue and cooperation, we will gladly join hands," he said.

Relations between Washington's two key Asian allies have sharply deteriorated since Japan ended South Korea's fast-track trade status earlier this month, prompting Seoul to do the same.

Moon also laid out an ambitious timeline for peace with North Korea despite recent short-range ballistic missile tests and angry saber rattling by the communist state as it denounced joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises that began last week.

"In spite of a series of worrying actions taken by North Korea recently, the momentum for dialogue remains unshaken," Moon said.



Moon

He called on the North and the United States to resume working-level nuclear negotiations as soon as possible, saying the process is at "the most critical juncture."

Moon, whose five-year term will end in 2022, stressed diplomatic and economic goals in pursuing peace with the North.

His administration is eager to connect roads and railways, which would open land routes to China and Russia, for example. But that initiative is limited by U.S.-led sanctions against the North over its nuclear weapons program.

"I pledge to solidify denuclearization and a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula during my term in office. I will initiate the peace economy upon this foundation and move toward unification," he said.

Moon also vowed to "solidify the foundation" for the two Koreas to co-host the 2032 Olympics "and stand tall in the world as one Korea by achieving peace and unification by 2045, which will mark the 100th anniversary of liberation."

The South Korean president, who took office in 2017 after his conservative predecessor was ousted and jailed over a corruption scandal, has staked his political legacy on pursuing peace with the North.

His administration seeks to create a single market with the North to provide new opportunities for prosperity in the impoverished communist state as well as solutions for problems in the South including an aging population and a low birth rate.

"If we combine the capabilities of the two Koreas, even while maintaining their respective political systems, it will be possible to create a unified market of 80 million people," he said.

The comment addressed one of the major questions about how unification would be possible since the North Korean regime is accused of rampant human rights abuses as it maintains its hold on power by brutally repressing its people.

Moon's efforts enjoyed several successes last year as he and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met three times and agreed to a series of inter-Korean economic initiatives. But he has been stymied by sanctions that prevent many projects from going forward.

Nuclear talks between Pyongyang and Washington also stalled after Kim and President Donald Trump failed to reach agreement during their second summit in late February in Vietnam.

The two leaders pledged to restart negotiations during an impromptu meeting in June on the Korean border, with Moon on the sidelines, but no date has been set.

Instead, the North has accused the other sides of reneging on agreements and warned it may resume long-range missile and nuclear tests.

It also has stepped up its criticism of South Korea, saying it will leave Seoul out of its talks with the United States in an apparent bid to drive a wedge in the longtime alliance.

Moon called on all sides to raise concerns at the negotiating table.

The U.S.-South Korean alliance, which was forged in the 1950-53 Korean War, also is facing pressure from recent comments by Trump who is pressing Seoul to pay more to offset the costs of stationing some 28,500 U.S. troops on the peninsula.

The State Department issued reassuring words on behalf of Trump and the United States in a message congratulating the South on the holiday.

"On this day, we reaffirm the enduring strength" of the alliance, "which remains the linchpin of peace and security in northeast Asia and the broader Indo-Pacific region," it said in a statement.

Underscoring the high stakes as North Korea has sought to show it has other options, Russian President Vladimir Putin also sent congratulations to Kim Jong Un on the holiday, according to the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

gamel.kim@stripes.com
Twitter: @kimgamel

North Korea's missile tests crank up threat level for US, S. Korea

By Simon Denyer
The Washington Post

TOKYO — President Donald Trump has brushed off North Korea's resumption of missile launches, but the volley of tests in the past four months has significantly raised the country's military capabilities and the threat they pose to South Korea and U.S. forces on the peninsula, experts say.

The launches have included at least two new types of short-range ballistic missiles and a mobile multiple-rocket launcher. Pyongyang has also seen fit to show off a submarine that may be intended to carry nuclear warheads.

Trump says he's been told that Kim Jong Un, the North Korean leader, "only smiles when he sees me." But photos released by North Korean state media show the dictator beaming from cheek to cheek at the successful tests.

"There's no question that the 2019 testing campaign that began in April has showcased some quite serious qualitative advancement in North Korean missile capabilities," said Ankit Panda, an adjunct senior fellow in the Defense Posture Project at the Federation of American Scientists. "The core theme across all of the new weapons seems to be survivability, responsiveness, and missile-defense defeat."

The weapons that North Korea has showcased, including a road-mobile short-range ballistic missile known as the KN-23, with a range of at least 280 miles, appear specifically designed to confound South Korea's missile-defense system.

"The three missiles have several things in common: they are solid fuel, they are mobile, they are fast, they fly low, and at least the KN-23 can maneuver in-flight, which is very impressive," said Vipin Narang, an associate professor of political science at MIT.

"Any one of the missiles would pose a challenge to regional and [South Korean] missile defenses given these characteristics. Together, they pose a nightmare."

On Wednesday, South Korea's defense ministry announced it would raise defense spending by an average of more than seven percent a year for the next five years, with money set aside to improve its radar detection and missile capabilities, to "secure ample interception capabilities against new types of ballistic missiles North Korea has recently test-fired."

South Korea's missile-defense system was primarily built around the threat posed by North Korea's older, comparatively clumsier Scud-class missiles. It includes U.S.-made mobile Patriot and PAC-23 missiles, the sea-based Aegis system and the land-based Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, or THAAD.

No system is impregnable, but North Korea's new missiles appear designed to find one of the biggest gaps in Seoul's armor.

Traditional ballistic missiles fly in an arc that takes them out of earth's atmosphere. But the KN-23, which appears similar to the Russian Iskander missile, took a lower trajectory, spending much of its flight at an altitude of between 25 and 30 miles — potentially too high for the Patriot batteries, but too low for THAAD and Aegis systems to easily intercept.

Ferenc Dalnoki-Veress, scientist-in-residence at Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, Calif., says a ballistic missile flies in a predictable arc defined by gravity, just like a baseball thrown high into the air, making it easier to catch. The KN-23 is like a knuckleball — fast, low, unpredictable and almost impossible to catch.

That the latest missiles are solid-fueled makes them easier to deploy and fire at short-notice: liquid fuel is corrosive and less stable, and has to be added to a missile just before launch, a process that can give an adversary vital advance warning. Solid-fuel rockets, mounted as these have been on vehicles, can be hidden, moved around at will and launched quickly, making them almost impossible to take out before they are fired.

While North Korea may not yet have the ability to miniaturize a nuclear warhead sufficiently to attach it to a missile such as the KN-23, conventional warheads that hit South Korean nuclear power plants could also be devastating, experts say.



Korean Central News Agency

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, seen here inspecting a new submarine, has launched multiple missile tests leaving South Korea and the U.S. concerned.

"I hope nuclear warheads will never be affixed to the KN-23, but if they are, it will be impossible for a threatened country to discriminate between an incoming nuke or high explosive," said Melissa Hanham, a missile expert at the One Earth Future foundation. "This leads to a very destabilizing dynamic that will likely lead to escalation and preemptive action."

Finally, the fact that North Korea fired off 10 of the KN-23 missiles during the past four months shows it has no shortage of inventory, said Narang, suggesting Kim has kept a promise made at the beginning of last year to move to a new phase of mass-producing missiles and nuclear bombs.

Saturday's test appeared to show off a second type of short-range missile, described by state-run Korea Central News Agency as a new weapon that has an "advantageous tactical character different to the existing weapon systems."

Jeffrey Lewis, a scholar at the Middlebury Institute, said it was very early to be sure about this new weapon, but said it looked like a different class of short-range missile, similar in shape but larger than the U.S. Army Tactical Missile System or Israel's LORA, or Long Range Attack, missile.

But the tests have not only been designed to raise North Korea's military capabilities. They have also helped Kim bolster his reputation at home as a strongman determined to defend the regime's security.

NATION

Rep. King: Incest, rape helped populate world

By Scott McFetridge
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — U.S. Rep. Steve King on Wednesday defended his call for a ban on all abortions by questioning whether there would be "any population of the world left" if not for births due to rape and incest.

Speaking before a conservative group in the Des Moines suburb of Urbandale, the Iowa congressman reviewed legislation he has sought that would outlaw abortions without exceptions for rape and incest. King justified the lack of exceptions by questioning how many people would be alive if not for those conceived through rapes and incest.

"What if we went back through all the family trees and just pulled those people out that were products of rape and incest? Would there be any population of the world left if we did that?" King asked, according to video of the event, which was covered by The Des Moines Register. "Considering all the wars and all the rape and pillage that's taken place ... I know I can't certify that I'm not a part of a product of that."

He added: "It's not the baby's fault for the sin of the father, or of the mother."

A King spokesman didn't immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

The nine-term Republican congressman, who represents a sprawling, largely rural 39-county district, has been criticized repeatedly for comments he's made over the years, especially on issues related to race and immigration.

Shortly before the November 2018 election, The Washington Post reported that King met in Austria with the far-right Freedom Party, a group with Nazi ties. King said the meeting was with business leaders, including one person from the Freedom Party, but the newspaper stood by its story.

Soon after the election, King was quoted in a New York Times story saying, "White nationalist, white supremacist, Western civilization — how did that language become offensive?" The comments were denounced as racist and led the House to vote 424-1 to rebuke King. Republican leaders also stripped him of his committee assignments.

> **'I am 100% pro-life but Steve King's bizarre comments ... diminish our message & damage our cause.'**
> **Sen. Randy Feenstra**
> R-Iowa

Although King has usually breezed to victories in the conservative 4th Congressional District, he narrowly won his last election over Democrat J.D. Scholten.

This year, several candidates have said they will challenge King for the Republican nomination, including conservative state Sen. Randy Feenstra. Scholten also recently announced he'd again run for the seat.

After King's comment Wednesday, Feenstra said in a statement, "I am 100% pro-life but Steve King's bizarre comments and behavior diminish our message & damage our cause."

Scholten also criticized King.



CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/AP

Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, seen here on Jan. 26, says rape and incest helped populate the world and wants a ban on abortions.

"Yet again, Steve King puts his selfish, hateful ideology above the needs of the people of Iowa's 4th District. Excusing violence — in any way — is entirely unacceptable," Scholten said in a statement.

In a tweet, U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney, the No. 3 Republican in House leadership, called King's comments "appalling and bizarre" and added, "it's time for him to go."

Several Democratic presidential candidates noted King's comments and urged people to contribute to Scholten's campaign.

"You would think it would be pretty easy to come out against rape and incest," one of the presidential candidates, Pete Buttigieg, said in a statement. "Then again, you'd think it'd be pretty easy to come out against white nationalism."

Autopsy finds broken bones in Epstein's neck

By Carol D. Leonnig and Aaron C. Davis
The Washington Post

An autopsy found that financier Jeffrey Epstein sustained multiple breaks in his neck bones, according to two people familiar with the findings, deepening the mystery about the circumstances around his death.

Among the bones broken in Epstein's neck was the hyoid bone, which in men is near the Adam's apple. Such breaks can occur in those who hang themselves, particularly if they are older, according to forensic experts and studies on the subject. But they are more common in victims of homicide by strangulation, the experts said.

The details are the first findings to emerge from the autopsy of Epstein, a convicted sex offender and multimillionaire in federal custody on charges of sex trafficking. He died early Saturday morning after guards found him hanging in his cell at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan and he could not be revived.

U.S. Attorney General William Barr, whose department oversees the Bureau of Prisons facility where Epstein died, has described his death as an "apparent suicide." Justice officials declined to comment on the new information from Epstein's autopsy.

The office of New York City's chief medical examiner, Barbara Sampson, completed an autopsy of Epstein's body Sunday. But Sampson listed the cause of his death as pending.

Sampson's office did not comment on the injuries found in the autopsy.

The details add to the bizarre circumstances surrounding Epstein's death, which have launched a wave of questions and conspiracy theories about how he could have died in federal custody. Even President Donald Trump has egged on speculation, without evidence, that Epstein — whose alleged victims say they were pushed to have sex with his powerful and celebrity friends — might have been killed to keep him from spilling the secrets of others.

The revelation of Epstein's neck injuries follows reports that officers at the Metropolitan Correctional Center broke protocol and failed to properly monitor him.

Corrections officers had not checked on Epstein for "several" hours before he was found hanging in his cell, a person familiar with the matter said, one of a series of missteps in the hours leading up to his death.

Israel bars entry to Muslim US lawmakers Tlaib, Omar

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel said Thursday that it will bar two newly-elected Democratic congresswomen from entering the country ahead of a planned visit over their support for a Palestinian-led boycott movement, a decision announced shortly after President Donald Trump tweeted that it would "show great weakness" to allow them in.

The move to bar Reps. Rashida Tlaib, of Michigan, and Ilhan Omar, of Minnesota, from visiting the close American ally appeared to be unprecedented, and marked a deep foray by Israel into America's bitterly polarized politics. It is also a sharp escalation of Israel's campaign against the international boycott movement.

In a statement, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel is "open to critics and criticism," except for those who advocate boycotts against it.

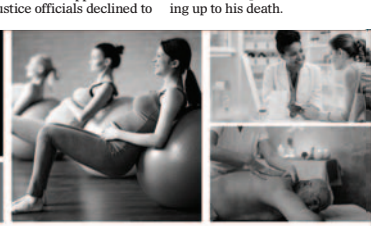
"Congresswomen Tlaib and Omar are leading activists in promoting the legislation of boycotts against Israel in the American Congress," Netanyahu charged. He said their itinerary "revealed that they planned a visit whose sole objective is to strengthen the boycott against us and deny Israel's legitimacy."

The two Muslim members of Congress are outspoken critics of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. Tlaib's family immigrated to the U.S. from the West Bank. Israel said it would consider any request from Tlaib to visit relatives on humanitarian grounds.

MIFTAH, the Palestinian organization that was set to host Tlaib and Omar in the West Bank, issued a statement saying that Israel's decision was "an affront to the American people and their representatives" and "an assault on the Palestinian people's right to reach out to decision-makers and other actors from around the world."

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NATION

6 officers shot in hourslong standoff in Pa.



BILL TRENWITH/AP

A man exits a building with hands up in Philadelphia on Wednesday.

BY CHRISTINA PACIOLLA AND CLAUDIA LAUER
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — An hourslong standoff where a gunman shot at police, wounding six of them, as he was barricaded inside a Philadelphia home somehow ended with no fatalities.

Philadelphia Police Commissioner Richard Ross, who spent hours Wednesday negotiating with the gunman through the phone, said the situation that unfolded "could have been far worse."

"This was a very dynamic situation, one that I hope we never see again," he said Thursday outside the Philadelphia Police Department, which is in the process of investigating the scene.

The gunman eventually came out of the home early Thursday after police deployed tear gas in the building. He was taken to a hospital for evaluation and then placed into custody.

A law enforcement official identified the suspect as Maurice Hill. The official said the 36-year-old has a criminal record that included firearms charges. The official wasn't authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The standoff started around 4:30 p.m. as officers went to a home in a north Philadelphia neighborhood of brick and stone rowhomes to serve a narcotics warrant in an operation "that went awry almost immediately," Ross said.

Many officers "had to escape through windows and doors to get (away) from a barrage of bullets," Ross said.

The six officers who were struck by gunfire have been released from hospitals, Philadelphia police Sgt. Eric Gripp.

Two other officers were trapped inside the house for about five hours after the shooting broke out but were freed by a SWAT team well after darkness fell on the residential neighborhood.

Ross said the reason he made the unusual decision to be the person negotiating with Hill was because he was "so worried" about his officers stuck inside.

"I wouldn't be able to live with myself if I was 200 feet away," he said Thursday.

Three people who officers had taken into custody in the house before the shooting started were also safely evacuated, police said.

Police implored the gunman to surrender, at one point patching in his lawyer on the phone with him to try to persuade him to give up, Ross said.

Authorities also held a press conference amid the standoff in hopes that the gunman or someone he was communicating with may hear them. Ross said he was "very intentional and deliberate" with the words he used during the briefing since he was not sure if Hill knew there were two officers trapped upstairs.

Temple University locked down part of its campus, and several children and staff were trapped for some time in a nearby day care.

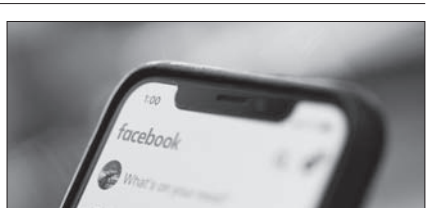
Police tried to push crowds of onlookers and residents back from the scene. In police radio broadcasts, officers could be heard calling for backup as reports of officers getting shot poured in.

"There was just a lot of screaming and chaos," said Abdul Rahman Muhammad, 21, an off-duty medic.

Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney said he was thankful that officers' injuries weren't life-threatening.

"I'm a little angry about someone having all that weaponry and all that firepower, but we'll get to that another day," Kenney said.

Facebook had people transcribe user audio



JENNY KANE/AP

Facebook says it paid contractors to transcribe audio clips from users of its Messenger service.

BY MAE ANDERSON AND RACHEL LERMAN
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Facebook has paid contractors to transcribe audio clips from users of its Messenger service, raising privacy concerns for a company with a history of privacy lapses.

The practice was, until recently, common in the tech industry. Companies say the use of humans helps improve their services. But users aren't typically aware that humans and not just computers are reviewing audio.

Transcriptions done by humans raise bigger concerns because of the potential of rogue employees or contractors leaking details. The practice at Google emerged after some of its Dutch language audio snippets were leaked. More than 1,000 recordings were obtained by Belgian broadcaster VRT NWS, which noted that some contained sensitive personal conversations — as well as information that identified the person speaking.

"We feel we have some control over machines," said Jamie Winterton, director of strategy at Arizona State University's Global Security Initiative. "You have no control over humans that way. There's no way once a human knows something to drag that piece of data to the recycling bin."

Jeffrey Chester, executive director for the Center for Digital Democracy privacy-advocacy group, said it's bad enough that Facebook uses artificial intelligence as part of its data-monitoring activities. He said the use of humans, as well, is "even more alarming."

Tim Bajarin, tech columnist and president of Creative Strategies, said it's a bigger problem when humans use the information beyond its intended purpose.

Facebook said audio snippets reviewed by contractors were masked so as not to reveal anyone's identity. It said it stopped the practice a week ago. The development was reported earlier by Bloomberg.

Google said it suspended doing this worldwide while it investigates the Dutch leaks. Apple has also suspended its use of humans for the Siri digital assistant, though it plans to bring them back after seeking explicit permission from users. Amazon said it still uses humans, but users can decline, or opt out, of the human transcriptions.

Crackdown on impaired driving during Labor Day

BY LUIS ALONSO LUGO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — About 30,000 police officers will be out on the roads around the country through the Labor Day weekend to crack down on impaired driving, an annual effort that this year poses potential risks to immigrants who fear getting stopped and deported.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced Wednesday it will run the high-visibility enforcement campaign during what is one of the deadliest times on U.S. roads. Similar efforts have taken place in previous years, but the heightened police presence this year may increase the fear of potential deportation among some immigrants.

Partner organizations in the traffic-safety campaign "If You Feel Different, You Drive Different — Drive High, Get a DUI" offered mixed opinions about the possibility that it could lead to the deportation of immigrants in the country illegally.

Domingo Herraiz, director of programs at the International Association of Chiefs of Police aid, "It is not the role of local law enforcement. That is the role of Homeland Security."

But Darrin Grondel, chairman of the Governors Highway Safety Association, said deportations could happen because "it is going to be up to the local jurisdictions. There are very different jurisdictional approaches for that."

Cody Wofsy, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union, said "local law enforcement should not be acting as a federal immigration force, but non-citizens in the country during this campaign, and in general, should be aware of their rights and assert them if they need to."

The campaign, which begins Friday, has a $13 million media budget to run public service announcements on television, radio, online and on social media and in cinemas to stress that not only alcohol but also marijuana and prescribed medications can cause impaired driving.

"Almost everyone knows that driving drunk is dangerous, puts lives at risk, and get you a DUI, but there isn't the same awareness for drug-impaired driving," NHTSA Deputy Administrator Heidi King said.

NATION

Hickenlooper ends bid for presidency, eyes Senate

Associated Press

DENVER — Former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper on Thursday ended his longshot bid for the Democratic presidential nomination and said he may run for the Senate in 2020 against a Republican considered one of the most politically vulnerable incumbents.

Hickenlooper said he had heard from many in his state urging him to enter the Senate race.

"They remind me how much is at stake for our country. And our state. I intend to give that some serious thought," he said.

Colorado's shift to the left could put GOP Sen. Cory Gardner in jeopardy, and at least 10 Democrats have launched campaigns, setting up a competitive primary even before Hickenlooper, 67, makes a decision.

Hickenlooper became a political giant in Colorado for his quirky, consensus-driven and unscripted approach to politics. He once jumped out of a plane to promote a ballot measure to increase state spending and he won two statewide elections during years of Republican waves. He also was Denver's mayor.

He began his White House campaign in March, promising to unite the country. Instead, he quickly became a punch line.

"While this campaign didn't have the outcome we were hoping for, every moment has been worthwhile," he tweeted Thursday.

Founding a series of brewpubs made Hickenlooper a multimillionaire. But shortly before taking his first trip to Iowa as a presidential candidate, he balked on national television at calling himself a capitalist. Then, at a CNN town hall, he recounted how he once took his mother to see a pornographic movie.

He positioned himself as a common-sense candidate who couldn't be labeled a "socialist" by Republicans. But Hickenlooper couldn't make his voice heard in the crowded Democratic field of about two dozen candidates.

It didn't help that, by Hickenlooper's own admission, he was a mediocre debater and an erratic public speaker. In the end, he could not scrape together enough money for many of his trademark quirky ads, only launching one in which avid beer drinkers toast Hickenlooper by comparing him to favorite brews.



CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/AP

Democratic presidential candidate former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper speaks Saturday in Des Moines, Iowa.



JOHN LOCHER/AP

Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., speaks Monday in Davenport, Iowa.

Harris offers plan for gun control

BY TYLER PAGER AND SAHIL KAPUR
Bloomberg

Sen. Kamala Harris laid out a gun control plan Wednesday that focuses on domestic terrorism, proposing action to add online gun sellers to background check requirements and expand the mission of the National Counterterrorism Center to include domestic terrorism.

If elected, Harris said she would take executive action to require major online gun sales platforms to perform background checks, ensure domestic terrorism is included in the counterterrorism center's mission and commit $2 billion to investigate and prosecute domestic terrorists.

Under federal law, unlicensed dealers may be legally allowed to sell firearms without conducting a background check, and those sales can occur at gun shows or online.

The Democratic presidential candidate also said she would give law enforcement new tools to fight domestic terrorism by petitioning federal courts to temporarily seize guns from terrorism suspects or individuals who may commit a hate crime.

"In America, loaded guns should not be a few clicks away for any domestic terrorist with a laptop or smartphone," Harris said in a statement. "We need to take action to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people and stop violent, hate-fueled attacks before they happen. By focusing on confronting these domestic terror threats, we can save lives."

Gun control has been thrust to the forefront of the presidential nominating contest after back-to-back mass shootings earlier this month in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio. The suspect in the El Paso shooting was believed to have been motivated by white supremacist beliefs.

President Donald Trump has said he wants "meaningful background checks" while also ensuring that the National Rifle Association's views are "fully represented and respected" as part of discussions in Congress on the issue. The powerful organization opposes expanding checks.

Among Democrats, Joe Biden said at a gun safety forum last weekend that he wanted guns to have biometric locks based on fingerprints to limit who's able to use a gun. Elizabeth Warren has called for legislation to tighten firearms regulation and reinstitute a federal ban on assault weapons. Warren also called for creating a federal licensing system for gun ownership and raising taxes on firearms and ammunition.

New Hampshire voters express 'Trumpgret'

BY HUNTER WOODALL
Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. — When Chad Johansen voted for Donald Trump in 2016, he hoped he was picking someone who could help small-business owners compete with bigger companies. But that hasn't happened, and now the 26-year-old owner of NH iPhone Repair feels what he calls "Trumpgret."

The Republican president has done little to address health care issues for a small employer, he said, and the Manchester man remains on edge about how Trump's tariffs could affect his business, which employs fewer than 10 people. Beyond that, he said, unrelenting news about bigotry and racism in the Trump administration is "a turnoff."

"The president's supposed to be the face of the United States of America," said Johansen, who voted for Democrat Barack Obama in 2012. "And supposed to make everyone be proud to be an American and stand up for everyone who is an American. And I don't feel that President Trump's doing that. I feel like it's chaos."

That sentiment is concerning for Trump as he traveled to New Hampshire on Thursday for a re-election rally. The state, which he lost by about 2,700 votes in 2016, is doing well economically, at least when using broad measures. But beneath the top-line data are clear signs that the prosperity is being unevenly shared, and when the tumult of the Trump presidency is added to the mix, the state's flinty voters may not be receptive to his appeals.

An August University of New Hampshire Survey Center poll found that 42% of New Hampshire adults approve of Trump while 53% disapprove.

The poll also showed that 49% approve of Trump's handling of the economy and 44% disapprove.

How New Hampshire receives the president on Thursday will offer a fresh test of whether people will give credit to Trump for the state's economy, base their decision on social issues or make their vote a referendum on the president's character.

"I'm not sure any great tax policy that Trump has envisioned or created has helped it," said Tom Rath, a longtime Republican National Convention delegate and former New Hampshire attorney general who backed Republican John Kasich for president in 2016. "I think the climate is good. We're flourishing in large part because Massachusetts is flourishing."

At 2.4%, New Hampshire's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May was among the lowest in the nation. But wage growth is significantly below national gains. Average hourly earnings rose a scant 1.1% in New Hampshire in 2018, lagging the 3% gain nationwide, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In other ways, like the home ownership rate — first in the nation — and median household income — seventh in the U.S. — census data shows the state is thriving.

Ahead of the president's visit, his campaign held an event in Bedford, N.H., on Tuesday to applaud the success of the economy under Trump, singling out the low unemployment rate. Joblessness in New Hampshire was also relatively low at the end of the Obama administration, a sign that Trump inherited an improving economy.

New Hampshire's four Electoral College votes are far below that of key swing states like Florida, Wisconsin and Michigan, but its influence can prove powerful in close election years.

VIETNAM AT 50

Behind the music

Jimi Hendrix electrified Woodstock with 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' but what did he mean to accomplish?

By Sean Moores
Stars and Stripes

On Aug. 18, 1969, former soldier Jimi Hendrix, resplendent in bright red headband, white fringed shirt and bell-bottom blue jeans, unfurled what has been called the cultural moment of the 1960s when he played an incendiary instrumental version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" for remnants of the crowd at the Woodstock Music & Art Fair in Bethel, N.Y.

Hendrix died 13 months later, shortly after his amplified anthem received widespread exposure in the Academy Award-winning "Woodstock" documentary. He was 27. His legacy as a guitar god is unassailable, but 50 years after Woodstock a question remains: Was Hendrix's performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" patriotism, or was it protest?

The interpretation lies with the listener. At first, Hendrix adhered to the melody of the song, which had only been the official U.S. national anthem for 38 years. By the time he got to "the rockets' red glare," though, Hendrix unleashed the full force of his white Fender Stratocaster.

The squeals of amplifier feedback and dive-bombing on his electric guitar's vibrato bar have been said to evoke combat, fighter jets, artillery, ambulance sirens and, perhaps, riots in the streets. It also included a segue into taps, the traditional bugle call played at military funerals.

Popular interpretation, rooted in the mythology of the '60s, favors protest. It was a complicated time in American history. National pride swelled a month earlier when Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, but there was widespread conflict. Civil rights struggles and changing sexual politics made frequent headlines, as did the Vietnam War. As Hendrix performed that 3-minute, 46-second version of the national anthem, the war raged half a world away. More than 35,000 American troops had been killed.

"It was the most electrifying moment of Woodstock, and it was probably the single greatest moment of the '60s," New York Post pop critic Al Aronowitz wrote. "You finally heard what that song was about, that you can love your country, but hate the government." (Francis Scott Key, whose patriotic poem written in 1814 later became "The Star-Spangled Banner," might have disagreed.)

Noted cultural critic Greil Marcus, who got his start reviewing music for Rolling Stone magazine in the '60s, allowed for a more open-ended interpretation in Clara Bingham's 2016 book "Witness to the Revolution: Radicals, Resisters, Vets, Hippies, and the Year America Lost Its Mind and Found Its Soul."

"I always think of it as the greatest protest song ever, but it's not just a protest song, it's an incredibly layered, ambiguous piece of music," Marcus said. "To take the national anthem and distort it … it was taken as an attack on the United States for its crimes in Vietnam, which is not an unreasonable way to hear it, but it's also a great piece of music. No art that has its own integrity is ever going to be about one thing or be one thing."

Addressing the anthem

Even in the pre-Twitter era, Hendrix was hounded to explain his motivations. At a news conference a few weeks after Woodstock, Hendrix said, "We're all Americans … it was like 'Go, America!' … We play it the way the air is in America today. The air is slightly static, see."

He certainly harbored no ill will toward U.S. troops. Earlier in his Woodstock set, Hendrix dedicated "Izabella" to "maybe a soldier in the Army, singing' about his old lady that he dreams about and humpin' a machine gun instead."

If Hendrix was protesting the national anthem or U.S. involvement in Vietnam, he never said so. On Sept. 9, Hendrix again addressed "The Star-Spangled Banner" on "The Dick Cavett Show."

"What was the controversy about the national anthem and the way you played it?" Cavett asked Hendrix.

"I don't know, man," he replied. "All I did was play it. I'm American, so I played it. I used to have to sing it in school, they made me sing it in school, so … it was a flashback."

Cavett, addressing the audience, said, "This man was in the 101st Airborne, so when you write your nasty letters in …"

"Nasty letters?" Hendrix asked.

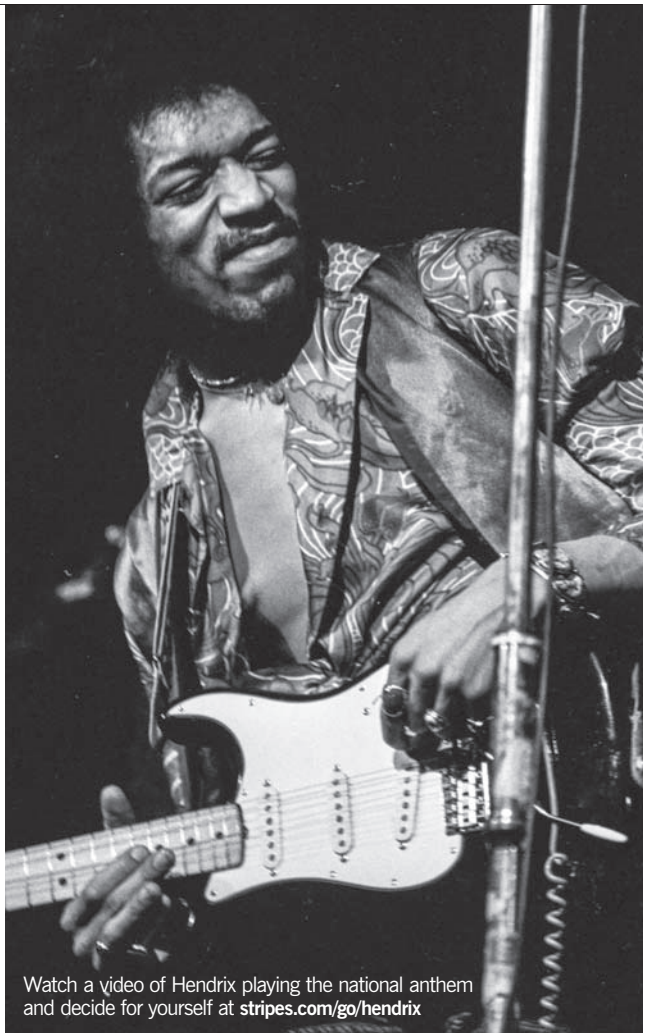
"Well, when you mention the national anthem and talk about playing it in any unorthodox way," Cavett said. "you immediately get a guaranteed percentage of hate mail from people who say, 'How dare …'."

"That's not unorthodox," Hendrix said, cutting off his host. "That's not unorthodox."

"It isn't unorthodox?" Cavett asked.

"No, no. I thought it was beautiful. But there you go, you know?" Hendrix said, to applause from the audience.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



Watch a video of Hendrix playing the national anthem and decide for yourself at **stripes.com/go/hendrix**

Stars and Stripes

Jimi Hendrix performs at Jahrhunderthalle in Frankfurt, West Germany, in January 1969. In August of that year, Hendrix defined Woodstock with his performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

stripes.com/vietnam50

An occasional series marking the 50th anniversary of the war.

- The deadly battle of Hamburger Hill became synonymous with the futility of the war.
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- What was behind the decision 50 years ago to ease the treatment of the POWs in Hanoi.
- Army nurse pays tribute to those lost from her high school class.

VIETNAM AT 50

FROM PAGE 10

J. Kimo Williams, 69, also thought it was beautiful. Williams, who founded the Lt. Dan Band with actor Gary Sinise, saw Hendrix perform at the Waikiki Bowl in May 1969, just before shipping off to the Army at 19. He was stationed at Fort Ord in California during Woodstock and did not become aware of "The Star-Spangled Banner" performance until checking out the "Woodstock" soundtrack album at the service club in Vietnam.

Williams was so inspired by that Hendrix concert that he immediately decided to dedicate himself to the guitar and a career in music. While serving as a combat engineer in Vietnam, Williams included Hendrix songs in the repertoire of his band, The Soul Coordinators. After returning to the States, he used his GI Bill benefits to attend Berklee College of Music and became an award-winning composer. As a student of music, he sees a simpler interpretation of that Woodstock performance.

"If it had been someone else, on piano, who was a famous classical piano player, and that person decides to improvise over 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' I don't think there would have been as much of a controversy as [with] Hendrix doing it in his way," said Williams, who resides in Shepherdstown, W.Va., with his wife, artistic partner and fellow Army veteran, Carol.

"Because he did nothing to the melody to make it sound wrong. He did nothing with the melody or with the … he didn't say, 'here's my protest, and we gotta get out of this war and if we don't then here you go.' He played it. He wanted to, you know, the words … it says, 'the bombs are bursting.' He wasn't talking about Vietnam, he was talking about Francis Scott Key indicating in the song that the bombs were going off, so he wanted the bombs to go off. He was actually trying to sonically represent the words of 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' and I thought he did a great job of it."

Whatever Hendrix's intent, the moment apparently wasn't planned.

"'The Star-Spangled Banner'" "wasn't on the set list!" bassist Billy Cox told Atlanta Magazine in 2012. "We had rehearsed a repertoire and we played that repertoire … And then, Jimi just starts playing 'The Star-Spangled Banner!' At first I thought, 'OK, I know it, let's do it.' And then all of a sudden something told me, 'You better lay out of this one, Billy!' And what an incredible decision that was. Jimi was one of a kind. That was his moment there."

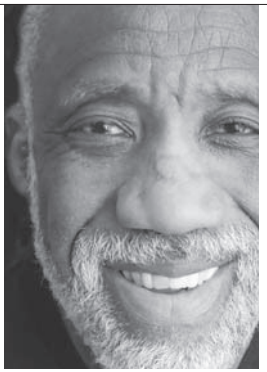
Cox continues to honor his friend on the all-star Experience Hendrix tours and with his Billy Cox Band of Gypsys Experience. Long before any of that, Cox and Hendrix were Army buddies at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Army years

Before he was renowned for screaming feedback, Hendrix was, briefly, a member of the Screaming Eagles. The 101st Airborne Division, that is.

Military service was unlikely his preferred career path, although a common one for poor, black teenagers in Hendrix's hometown of Seattle. The choice became more appealing after he ran afoul of the Seattle Police Department as a high school dropout.

After enlisting in May 1961, Hendrix initially embraced the structure of the Army and expressed a desire to be elite. In his 2005 Hendrix biography "Room Full of Mirrors," author Charles R. Cross cites a letter Hendrix sent to his father, Al, after getting his assignment as a supply clerk for the 101st at Fort Campbell. Hendrix pledges to "try my very best to make this Airborne for the sake of our name … I'll fix it so the whole family of Hendrixes will have the right to wear the 'Screaming Eagle' patch."



J. Kimo Williams

J. Kimo Williams, a Vietnam veteran, award-winning composer and co-founder of the Lt. Dan Band, saw Hendrix in concert just before joining the Army in 1969. Williams believes that Hendrix was trying to create the sounds of battle described by Francis Scott Key when he performed "The Star-Spangled Banner" at Woodstock.

Despite that early earnestness, military life soon lost its appeal for Hendrix. A chance meeting with Cox led to an impromptu jam. Soon after, they formed The Kasuals and began playing around nearby Clarksville and Nashville, Tenn. As his guitar skills rapidly improved and the number of gigs increased, Hendrix's interest in soldiering waned. He wanted to pursue a career in music and could focus on little else. He did not want to wait until his three-year commitment was up.

It did not take the Army long to grant his wish. Hendrix was written up for missing bed check, sleeping while on duty and unsatisfactory performance, among other infractions. He was even caught masturbating in the barracks, an act that was likely an intentional ploy to get kicked out of the service. Hendrix often said that a broken ankle suffered during a parachute jump led to his dismissal from the Army, but there is no mention of such an injury in his service records. He was discharged from the Army in June 1962.

Regardless of the reasons, Hendrix was once again a civilian and free to play music professionally. When Cox's hitch ended a short time later, he and Hendrix formed a new band, The King Kasuals. They toured the collection of black-owned clubs mostly in the South known as the Chitlin' Circuit, where Hendrix learned showman moves such as playing the guitar behind his back and with his teeth.

Experience takes off

Chas Chandler, the bassist for The Animals, was so blown away upon seeing Hendrix in 1966 that he offered on the spot to manage him. Hendrix flew to England to seek his fortune. Along with bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell, he formed The Jimi Hendrix Experience.

For all of his struggles in America, Hendrix took this power trio on a meteoric rise up the UK charts in 1967. They scored Top 10 hits in England with "Hey Joe," "Purple Haze" and "The Wind Cries Mary" in the first half of the year, and their acclaimed debut album, "Are You Experienced," followed later in the year. The band's success quickly spread to the United States.

The Experience recorded two more successful albums, "Axis: Bold as Love" and "Electric Ladyland," before tensions with Redding led Hendrix to break up the band after a performance June 29, 1969, at the Denver Pop Festival. Eight weeks later, in his debut with his new band, Hendrix encapsulated the spirit of the '60s.

A time of transition

Woodstock MC Chip Monck introduced the band as The Jimi Hendrix Experience, but Hendrix quickly corrected the record.

"Dig, we'd like to get something straight," he said. "We got tired of the Experience … it was blowin' our minds. So we decided to change the whole thing around, and call it Gypsy Sun and Rainbows. Or short, it's nothin' but a Band of Gypsys."

The new band had only been rehearsing for a matter of weeks. Hendrix's old Army buddy Billy Cox was on bass. Fellow Army and Chitlin' Circuit veteran Larry Lee, who had returned from Vietnam two weeks earlier, played rhythm guitar. Rounding out the rhythm section were percussionists Jerry Velez and Juma Sultan. They were joined by Experience holdover Mitch Mitchell on drums.

If Cox's recollection is correct, Hendrix hadn't planned to play "The Star-Spangled Banner" at Woodstock, an assertion backed up by Mitchell in his book "Inside the Experience." It was included in a medley that included "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)," "Purple Haze" and a free-form jam that became known as "Woodstock Improvisation."

If Hendrix was planning on making a generational statement, he didn't let on. "You can leave if you want to," Hendrix told the crowd near the end of the epic "Voodoo Child." "We're just jammin', that's all."

Creating the legend

"The Star-Spangled Banner" quickly became more than "just jammin'." The performance was Hendrix's vision, but he had some help in making the moment iconic.

By the time Hendrix took the stage, the crowd at Woodstock was far from the "half a million strong" immortalized in the Joni Mitchell song. He had been offered a Sunday-night slot during the rain-plagued festival, but Hendrix insisted on keeping his position as the closer. As a result, he didn't play until Monday morning.

Estimates vary, but conservatively the crowd occupying the disaster area that 72 hours earlier had been farmer Max Yasgur's alfalfa field was half the size it had been at its peak. It's possible that only a 10th of the attendees remained. Exponentially more people saw it in the theatrical release of the "Woodstock" film or in its countless airings during PBS pledge weeks over the years. One clip of the performance on YouTube has more than 3 million views.

Thelma Schoonmaker, a three-time Academy Award winner for film editing on "Raging Bull," "The Aviator" and "The Departed," received the first of her eight Oscar nominations for her work on "Woodstock." (Incidentally, all three films were directed by her fellow "Woodstock" editor Martin Scorsese.) Whatever Hendrix's intent, the editors definitely drew a parallel between what was happening on stage and what was happening in Southeast Asia.

"We had decided to go out in the field and film the remnant of the field like it was Vietnam," Schoonmaker said in Clara Bingham's "Witness to the Revolution." "We got beautiful footage, and we used that against Jimi Hendrix playing, massacring 'The Star-Spangled Banner' with Vietnam sounds."

Although it might have seemed like a once-in-a-lifetime performance, Hendrix played "The Star-Spangled Banner" live more than 50 times in his career, with more than two dozen of those versions coming before Woodstock. Wisconsin National Guard Sgt. Maj. Brian Bieniek, a Gulf War and Iraq War veteran who is researching a book he hopes to write about Hendrix, believes the Woodstock version is a cut above.

"The Woodstock version had more impact, I think, based on the event it was played at," said Bieniek, 46, of Madison. "Some of those other [versions] don't sound as good, and I don't know if it's because he was getting the feedback better at Woodstock or depending on what venue he's at, but … I honestly think that one stands up there at the top."

Lasting legacy

Hendrix has long been synonymous with the electric guitar, and his legacy has been burnished since his death from drug-induced asphyxiation in September 1970. The Jimi Hendrix Experience was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992. Rolling Stone ranked Hendrix No. 1 in its most recent list of the 100 Greatest Guitarists. The writeup in that issue, by Rage Against the Machine's Tom Morello, referenced the "riots in the streets and napalm bombs" in Hendrix's "The Star-Spangled Banner."

It's a performance that remains subject to speculation. Because so much of the music played at Woodstock was politically charged (Richie Havens' "Freedom," Country Joe McDonald's "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die Rag" and the Jefferson Airplane's "Uncle Sam Blues"), it's easy to read a statement of protest into Hendrix's "The Star-Spangled Banner." From there, it's not a stretch to draw a straight line to former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick's silent anthem protests.

"I think, in retrospect, it divided," said Williams, who is black. "You had the hippies and you had the non-hippies and then you had the right and you had the left. And so everybody on the left looked at it as a protest, [and] everybody on the right looked at it as almost like kneeling at the national anthem during a football game, as unpatriotic. There was no middle ground. No one just said it was a performance of music, and let's leave it alone. So as we've gone through societal changes … it's usually up to somebody far right or somebody far left to decide for the rest of us what is patriotic, what is not, what is an insult and what is not, and the rest of us kind of have to deal with it."

Hendrix's performance started an enduring debate, and it has stood the test of time. It came to represent the apex of the hippie ideal, which for many died as a result of the violence at the Rolling Stones' ill-fated show at Altamont Speedway in December 1969. Whatever Hendrix might have meant on that Monday morning has, as Greil Marcus said, its own integrity.

"I'm pretty sure [the] Woodstock [version of 'The Star-Spangled Banner'] was a protest song, but there's so many different versions of that, and they range from protest to comradeship to fear to fury, and many, many things besides that," music journalist, author and SiriusXM radio host Dave Marsh told Stars and Stripes in a 2016 interview. "Of everything in the psychedelic era that was really just out there, musically, and sonically, that is the greatest achievement because he managed to put into it, at various points, so many different perspectives.

"It WAS a generational statement, but it was a generational statement not of protest but of compassion — for everybody, including the Vietnamese. I think it was the most spiritual moment of his entire career, when he would do that song. It wasn't a gimmick. Not to my ear."

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NATION

After 1 death, heat wave eases slightly in South

By Jay Reeves
Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — An oppressive heat wave blamed for a death in Mississippi eased a little across the Southeast on Wednesday after a cold front pushed through the region, bringing damaging storms along with lower temperatures.

Stifling heat and humidity that had made it feel like it was 120 degrees in places was replaced by slightly cooler weather, forecasters said.

Damaging overnight storms ripped up roofs, knocked down power lines and toppled trees in northwest Alabama. No injuries were reported, but the National Weather Service warned of additional severe thunderstorms near the Florida Panhandle as the front moved southward.

The excessive heat began earlier this week and stretched across much of the U.S.

In the South, it limited outdoor work details for Alabama inmates and prompted requests from Baltimore teachers to install temporary fans in sweltering classrooms to make up for faulty air conditioning.

In Mississippi, Winston County Coroner Scott Gregory said a 74-year-old woman died of a heat-induced heart attack while mowing her lawn on Monday. The heat index was about 106 degrees at the time, he said, and the woman's body temperature was about 105 degrees at a hospital where she was treated.

Gregory said the woman's family didn't give permission for him to release her name, but she had a medical history that included multiple health problems and heart surgery.

Gregory said it was so hot in Mississippi he banned his 7-year-old son from practicing with his youth football team on Tuesday.

"You've got to have common sense," he said. "I mean, these are kids."

Heat alerts that extended northward into the Midwest earlier this week were limited on Wednesday to Gulf Coast states plus Georgia and South Carolina. The heat index was expected to reach around 110 degrees, forecasters said.

Higher temperatures also were expected in central California and the Southwest, where forecasters predicted afternoon highs could hit 115 degrees.

Even Alaska was hot. The National Weather Service office in Anchorage tweeted that the overnight low of 63 degrees tied the all-time high for a daily low temperature. The normal low is 51 degrees, it said.

Ahead of the start of the school year, Baltimore's teachers union requested fan donations as classrooms are expected to reach sweltering temperatures when students return next month. But district officials said electrical systems might not be equipped to handle it.

In Alabama, prison officials limited outdoor work details for inmates, and officers also were running large ventilation fans and providing prisoners with extra water and ice, spokesman Bob Horton said.



Max Becherer, The Advocate/AP

Members of a construction crew keep out of the sun as they work on an apartment building in New Orleans on Tuesday.

Vaping companies sue to delay review of e-cigarettes in US

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A vaping industry group sued the U.S. government on Wednesday to delay an upcoming review of thousands of e-cigarettes on the market.

The legal challenge by the Vapor Technology Association is the latest hurdle in the Food and Drug Administration's yearslong effort to regulate the multibillion-dollar vaping industry, which includes makers and retailers of e-cigarette devices and flavored solutions.

The vaping group argued that the latest deadline of next May to submit products for review could wipe out many of the smaller companies. The lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court in Kentucky.

E-cigarettes first appeared in the U.S. more than a decade ago and have grown in popularity despite little research on their long-term effects, including whether they can help smokers quit cigarettes.

In recent years, health authorities have warned of an epidemic of vaping by underage teenagers, particularly the leading brand Juul, known for its high nicotine content and easy-to-conceal device, which resembles a flash drive.

Nicotine is what makes both cigarettes and e-cigarettes addictive, and health experts say the chemical is harmful to developing brains.

San Francisco-based Juul is among 800 member companies of the vaping association.

The 2009 law that gave the FDA power over the traditional tobacco products did not mention e-cigarettes. And it wasn't until 2016 that the agency expanded its own regulations to include the devices. But since then FDA regulators have repeatedly pushed back the timeline, at one point until 2022, to begin review of the legions of vaping products that have come to market.

Frustrated by the delays, anti-tobacco groups including the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids sued the FDA to speed up the process. In June, a federal judge sided with the groups and set a deadline of next May for all companies to submit their products for federal review. The FDA has until next month to appeal the decision.



Steven Senne/AP

A high school principal displays vaping devices that were confiscated from students at the school in Massachusetts in April 2018. On Wednesday, the Vapor Technology Association filed a lawsuit against the U.S. government to delay a review of electronic cigarettes.

The vaping group's lawsuit said the FDA has now set five different deadlines.

"It is time for FDA to stop moving the goalposts and changing the rules in the middle of the game to the detriment of our manufacturers and small businesses," said Tony Abboud, the group's executive director, in a statement.

Vaping executives have long said that most companies will not be able to afford to conduct large, expensive studies needed for FDA review. Only products that meet FDA standards would be permitted to be sold.

Planned Parenthood might exit family planning program

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Raising the stakes in an ideologically charged standoff over women's health, Planned Parenthood said Wednesday it will soon leave the federal family planning program unless a court puts a hold on Trump administration rules that bar clinics from referring patients for abortions.

The administration responded that it is ready to operate the Title X family planning program without the organization that has been the largest provider. About 4 million women are served nationwide under the program, which distributes $260 million in grants to clinics. It's unclear how many patients would be affected.

Planned Parenthood spokeswoman Erica Sackin said that its affiliated clinics "will be formally out of the Title X program" by Monday, passing up federal funding, unless the full 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco halts the new rules. The appeals court is weighing a lawsuit by Planned Parenthood and others to overturn the rules; a panel of judges in effect had earlier allowed the administration to go ahead with enforcement.

Monday also is the deadline set by the federal Department of Health and Human Services for participants in the family planning program to submit plans on how they would comply with the rules, which are set to take effect Sept. 18.

In a notice to the court Wednesday, Planned Parenthood said it "will be forced to withdraw" by close of business on Monday unless the full court intervenes. Planned Parenthood says the administration's new policy is "unethical and dangerous," amounting to a "gag rule" on clinicians.

In response, HHS spokeswoman Mia Heck said Planned Parenthood represents fewer than 400 of 4,000 service sites around the country.

"To the extent that Planned Parenthood claims that it must make burdensome changes to comply with the final rule, it is actually choosing to place a higher priority on the ability to refer for abortion instead of continuing to receive federal funds to provide a broad range of acceptable and effective family planning methods," Heck said in a statement.

The immediate impact for patients remained unclear. Planned Parenthood says it serves about 40% of patients, but it has also pledged to keep its doors open as it contests the administration's policy change. Other program participants unaffiliated with Planned Parenthood have warned they'd leave the program as well.

It seemed likely that disruptions to the 50-year-old program would vary from state to state.

NATION

Flooded Mississippi menaces New Orleans

By Jeff Martin and Janet McConnaughey
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — The river that drains much of the flood-soaked United States is still running higher than normal, menacing New Orleans in multiple ways just as the hurricane season intensifies.

For months now, a massive volume of water has been pushing against the levees keeping a city mostly below sea level from being inundated. The Mississippi River ran past New Orleans at more than 11 feet above sea level for a record 292 days, dropping below that height only Monday.

"The big threat is water getting through or underneath," said Nicholas Pinter, an expert on river dynamics and flood risks who's studied levee breaches across the nation. "The longer the duration, the greater the threat."

Locals walked up levees from Baton Rouge to New Orleans to see the river for themselves as Tropical Storm Barry briefly menaced Louisiana last month, but the real damage runs underneath, experts say: All that rushing floodwater can scour levees along their foundations, causing damage in places that can't easily be seen.

"That ultimately could undermine the levee as well and cause a breach or a failure," said Cassandra Rutherford, assistant professor of geotechnical engineering at Iowa State University.



Gerald Herbert/AP

People walk on a levee at Algiers Point last month on the Mississippi River in New Orleans.

The federal agency that maintains the levees is aware of the risks. But Ricky Boyett, spokesman for the New Orleans office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said the corps is confident that South Louisiana river levees are in great condition, with improvements made since 2011.

"If there's a silver lining going into hurricane season with the river this high for this long, we're entering the hurricane season having done 200 inspections of the levee since February," Boyett said.

Inspectors were looking for parked barges, stuck debris or other potential trouble, such as tire ruts or damage from feral hogs on grassy surfaces. They also looked for water seeping through, and for sand boils — spots where water tunneling below a levee seems to bubble out of the ground.

Concrete mats armor underwater areas likely to be eaten away by the river's current, Boyett said. Sand boils get ringed with sandbags until the water pressure on both sides equalizes, stopping the flow. And because some permanent repairs can't be made during high water, dangerous seepage gets stopgap coverage: About 63,000 large sandbags have been used since March on one 300-foot-long seepage area upriver of Baton Rouge, he said.

Even so, experts who study flowing water say there's a risk the river could rise above the tops of some levees in the New Orleans area, if a hurricane pushes enough storm surge up the swollen river.

The city's levees held the river back in the great flood of 1927 and haven't been topped since then, Boyett said.

A Category 4 hurricane striking the Louisiana coastline can produce a 20-foot storm surge, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says. However, that surge's size at New Orleans, more than 100 winding river miles up from the coast, would be reduced by the Big Muddy's push seaward.

The levees range in height from 20 to 25 feet. While river levels are finally falling, the National Weather Service projects the Mississippi will remain above average at New Orleans as hurricane season heats up.

"We really have a heightened concern this year," said Scott Hagen, of Louisiana State University's Center for Coastal Resiliency.

For most of the past three decades, the Mississippi has run about 3 to 5 feet high in mid-August at New Orleans' Carrollton gauge. The last time it was this high was in August 2015, a year when no significant tropical weather reached Louisiana's coast, when it was 11.4 feet. It was 12.2 feet in 1993, another year Louisiana's coast escaped harm.

When Katrina formed as a tropical storm in the Bahamas on Aug. 24, 2005, the river stage in New Orleans was just 2.44 feet above sea level. It rose to 3.6 feet the day before Katrina devastated the city in 2005.

Old-style TVs placed on porches in Va. neighborhood by 'TV Santa'

By Hannah Natanson
The Washington Post

It was kind of like Christmas — except it was August, the only presents were vintage television sets and Santa had a TV on his head.

Residents of more than 50 households in Henrico County, Va., woke up this past weekend to find old-style TVs outside their doorsteps, said Matt Pecka, a lieutenant with the local police department. Pecka said police began receiving reports about the TVs early Sunday. By the morning, their phones were clogged with calls.

"Everyone started coming out of their houses, walking around the neighborhood looking at the TVs there on the doorstep," said Jeanne Brooksbank, one of the recipients, who lives in the Hampshire neighborhood. "It was very 'Twilight Zone.' "

Each home received exactly one TV, carefully placed so it faced inward toward the door, Brooksbank said. Some deliveries were caught on residents' doorbell cameras — and that's where things got truly bizarre.

The givers had TVs instead of faces.

The home videos reveal at least one of the deliverymen: a man dressed in a blue jumpsuit, black gloves and what appear to be brown hiking-style boots. He wears a TV set on his shoulders, positioned so it obscures his face.

Pecka said police believe he had a helper: another man in a white jumpsuit who also wore a TV as he made deliveries.

"We determined there was no credible threat to residents and that this was strictly an inconvenience," Pecka said. "It was" — long pause — "unique."

After borrowing a truck from the county's Solid Waste department, a half-dozen police officers collected the television sets in about an hour Sunday, Pecka said. The county will recycle them.

There was no additional cost to residents, and the incident didn't impair normal police activity, Pecka said. The department doesn't plan to investigate further, he said, although officials encourage residents to contact police if it happens again.

Even if police do identify "TV Santa Claus," as Brooksbank's husband nicknamed the giver, authorities probably will not press charges. The "closest offense to this" would be leaving an unwanted item on public or private property, Pecka said.

"But I mean, one TV neatly placed on the front doorstep of each resident … it wasn't done in a malicious manner," Pecka said.

At least one doorbell camera video shared with The Washington Post appears to back that up.

The video shows a man in a blue jumpsuit — a TV set perched atop his shoulders — carefully ascending the steps of a porch in the predawn darkness. He clutches a TV in his arms and wears black gloves and brown hiking boots.

The man stops at the top of the stairs, turns and squats — Olympic weightlifting-style — and places the TV on the porch, its screen turned toward the door. He pauses for a fraction of a second, as if to admire his handiwork, and starts heading back the way he came.

Halfway down, he swivels and looks directly at the camera. He cocks his head, waves three times and disappears into the night.

"I think it was awesome, lighthearted and so great to have a fun story like this, even though there are so many tragedies occurring," said Brooksbank, 48, referring to the deadly shootings in Dayton, Ohio, and El Paso, Texas. "I feel lucky I got a TV."



Courtesy of Jeanne Brooksbank

A television was left outside the Brooksbanks' home in Henrico County, Va., over the weekend.

Brooksbank said the neighborhood has floated a few theories to explain the TV dump: a college sports team, maybe, or a fraternity prank. Pecka declined to elaborate on any theories police may be considering.

It's not the first time this has happened. There was a similar TV delivery last year in Glen Allen, in the Grey Oaks neighborhood in Henrico County. The TVs appeared around the same time of year — in late August — but there were fewer of them, Pecka said.

CBS 6 News reported that about 20 TVs were left on Glen Allen porches on Aug. 23 last year. Henrico police looked into the unexpected gifts, according to CBS 6, but never identified the giver — and, unlike in the Hampshire neighborhood, there appeared to be no video footage.

In the hours after Brooksbank first found a TV on her porch at about 7 a.m. Sunday, her family cycled through surprise, curiosity and momentary fear, she said. Her son, Chase Brooksbank, 18, at one point suggested leaving the house.

"My son was like, 'Mom, we have got to get out of here, this is crazy, this is strange,' " she said.

But he reversed course, eventually piling into a car with a few friends and driving around the neighborhood to film a YouTube video documenting the event.

NATION

Untangling the mysteries of spider silk

Scientist's spider silk library could hold secrets for a variety of new materials

BY JEREMY REHM
Associated Press

NEW YORK — With two pairs of fine-tipped tweezers and the hands of a surgeon, Cheryl Hayashi began dissecting the body of a silver garden spider under her microscope.

In a few minutes she found what she was seeking: hundreds of silk glands, the organs spiders use to make their webs. Some looked like mashed potatoes, others like green worms or air-filled rubber gloves. Each lets the spider produce a different type of silk.

Some silk types can be stretchy, others stiff. Some dissolve in water, others repel it.

"They make so many kinds of silk!" Hayashi said. "That's just what boggles my mind."

Hayashi has collected spider silk glands of about 50 species, just a small dent in the more than 48,000 spider species known worldwide. Her lab at the American Museum of Natural History is uncovering the genes behind each type of silk to create a sort of "silk library." It's part of an effort to learn how spiders make so many kinds of silk and what allows each kind to behave differently.

The library could become an important storehouse of information for designing new pesticides and better materials for bullet-proof vests, space gear, biodegradable fishing lines and even fashionable dresses.

Hayashi has been at this for 20 years, but improved technology recently let scientists analyze the DNA of silk faster and produce artificial spider silk in bulk.

"Any function that we can think of where you need something that requires a lightweight material that's very strong, you can look to spider silk," Hayashi said.

Spider silks all start out the same: a wad of goo, akin to rubber cement or thick honey, as Hayashi describes it. Spiders make and stash it in a gland until they want to use the silk. Then, a narrow nozzle called a spigot opens. And as the goo flows out, it morphs into a solid silk strand that is weaved with other strands emerging from other spigots.

Nobody knows how many kinds of spider silks exist, but some species can produce a variety. Orb-weaving spiders, for example, make seven types. One has a sticky glue to catch prey. Another is tough but stretchy to absorb the impact of flying insects. The spider dangles from a third type that's as tough as steel.

How and why silks behave in these various ways is a puzzle, but the secret likely lies in genes. Finding those genes, though, isn't easy.

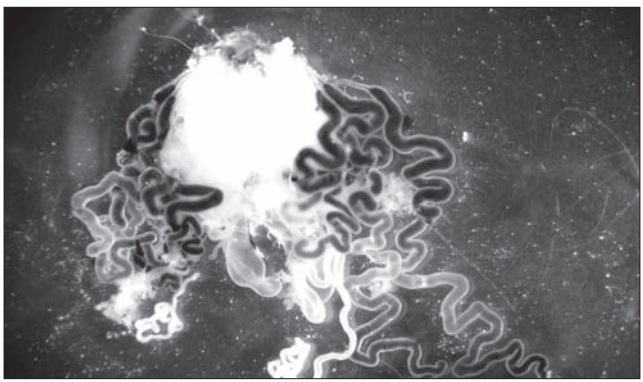
Until recently, scientists had to first chop the glands' DNA into pieces and have a computer try to put the sequence back together like a jigsaw puzzle. That's a daunting task, and it's especially difficult for spiders, because their genes are very long and repetitive.

It's as if the sentence "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog" is instead, "The quick brown fox jumps, jumps, jumps, jumps, jumps, jumps, jumps, jumps over the lazy dog," said Sarah Stellwagen from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. If you have no idea what the sentence says and have to rebuild it from a shredded mess of thousands of copies, how do you know how many "jumps" to put into it?

That's the problem Stellwagen faced when she determined the entire set of genes, and their DNA makeup, for spider silk glue. She'd thought she could do it quickly, but it took almost two years.

Scientists have to recover the full gene to truly mimic natural silk, she said. If they try to produce synthetic silk from just part of a gene or some lab-built stunted version, "it's not as good as what a spider makes," Stellwagen said.

That's the issue researchers and companies have had using genetically modified yeast, microbes and even goats to make synthetic silk. Only last year did a group make a small amount that perfectly mimicked an orb-weaving spider's dragline silk, the type it dangles from, using bacteria.



CHERYL HAYASHI, THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY/AP

This microscope photo shows the silk glands of a silver garden spider (Argiope argentata).





PHOTOS BY JEREMY REHM/AP

Above: Silver garden spiders sit in their webs at Cheryl Hayashi's lab at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Left: Hayashi has collected spider silk glands from about 50 species of spider. There are more than 48,000 known spider species.



ERIC RISBERG/AP

People fill the main entryway of George Washington High School to view the controversial 13-panel, 1,600-square foot mural, the "Life of Washington," during an open house for the public Thursday in San Francisco. More than a 100 people were there to view the mural.

San Francisco will keep, but cover, divisive mural at public high school

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The San Francisco school board voted Tuesday to preserve but cover up a public high school mural depicting slavery and the killing of a Native American.

After a public outcry, the board voted 4-3 to reverse its June vote to paint over the "Life of Washington" mural at George Washington High School. Instead, staff were directed to work out alternatives to cover the mural with panels or other materials depicting "the heroism of people of color in America" and their fight against racism and poverty, said board President Stevon Cook, who made the proposal.

"We are not going to paint over public art," he said. "We're going to find another way to keep it from public view."

The cover up will require an environmental review and the mural will remain on display at least until then. While the panels might conceivably be removable, some board members indicated that the intention was to keep the mural from view. The school district said the mural would be digitized.

The cost is expected to run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The 1936 work is painted directly on the school walls. It depicts the life of George Washington. Sections of the 1,600-square-foot work were intended to show the darker side of that history: white settlers standing over the body of a Native American and slaves working at Washington's estate.

Opponents called the mural racist and offensive.

"I am a great granddaughter of a slave. I don't need a mural in my school or office to tell me I'm a slave," said teacher Virginia Marshall, KTVU-TV reported. But supporters said destroying the mural would be historical and artistic censorship.

WORLD



RU-RTR Russian Television via AP

A Russian Ural Airlines' A321 plane lies in a cornfield after an emergency landing near Ramenskoye, outside Moscow, on Thursday.

Pilot hailed as hero after bird strike disables Russian plane

Associated Press

MOSCOW — The captain of a Russian passenger jet was hailed as a hero Thursday for landing his plane in a cornfield after it collided with a flock of gulls seconds after takeoff, causing both engines to malfunction. While dozens of people sought medical assistance, only one was hospitalized.

The event drew comparisons to the 2009 "Miracle on the Hudson," when a captain ditched his plane in New York's Hudson River after a bird strike disabled his engines.

The Ural Airlines A321 carrying 226 passengers and a crew of seven hit the birds as it was taking off Thursday from Moscow's Zhukovsky airport en route for Simferopol, in Crimea.

Russia's Rosaviatsiya state aviation agency chief Alexander Neradko told reporters that the crew "made the only right decision" to land immediately after both of the plane's engines malfunctioned, landing in a field about 3 miles from the runway.

"The crew has shown courage and professionalism and deserve the highest state awards," he said.

The airline said in a statement that the pilot shut down the engines to avoid fire as the plane landed with its fuel tanks fully loaded.

Ural Airlines lauded the crew for making the emergency landing and arranging a quick evacuation. The company said the captain, 41-year-old Damir Yusupov, is a highly experienced pilot who has flown over 3,000 hours.

"It was quite a feat to keep the plane from stalling and quickly find a place to land," Viktor Zabolotsky, a former test pilot, said in televised remarks.

Russian television stations carried footage of passengers standing in the cornfield next to the plane, hugging the pilot and thanking him for saving their lives.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, hailed the pilots as "heroes" and said they will receive state awards.

Syrians move closer to rebel-held town

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Syrian forces gained more ground from insurgents in the country's northwest on Thursday, edging closer to a major rebel-held town a day after militants shot down a government warplane in the area.

The government offensive, which intensified last week, has displaced nearly 100,000 people over the past four days, according to the Syrian Response Coordination Group, a relief group active in northwestern Syria.

Syrian troops have been on the offensive in Idlib and its surroundings, the last major rebel stronghold in Syria, since April 30. The region is home to some 3 million people, many of them displaced in other battles around the war-torn country.

The fighting over the past days has been concentrated on two fronts as government forces march toward the town of Khan Sheikhoun from the east and west. The latest offensive also aims to besiege rebel-held towns and villages in northern parts of Hama province, according to opposition activists.

The town of Khan Sheikhoun is a stronghold of al-Qaida-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the most powerful group in the rebel-held areas. The town was the scene of a chemical attack on April 4, 2017 that killed 89 people.

At the time, the United States, Britain and France pointed a finger at the Syrian government, saying their experts had found that nerve agents were used in the attack. Days later, the U.S. fired 59 U.S. Tomahawk missiles at the Shayrat Air Base in central Syria, saying the attack on Khan Sheikhoun was launched from the base.

The Syrian government and its Russian allies denied there was a chemical attack.

The government-controlled Syrian Central Military Media said Thursday that pro-government fighters captured three small villages, just west of Khan Sheikhoun.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitoring group, said the villages fell in the morning hours and that the town of Khan Sheikhoun is being bombarded relentlessly.

Syrian state media confirmed insurgents had downed the government plane on Wednesday. An al-Qaida-linked group has released a video of the pilot in which the handcuffed man identified himself as a lieutenant colonel in the Syrian air force.

In the video, the pilot says his fighter jet was shot down when he was carrying out a mission near Khan Sheikhoun.

Iranian tanker to leave Gibraltar despite US move

Associated Press

MADRID — Gibraltar on Thursday allowed a detained Iranian supertanker to leave the British overseas territory despite a last-minute U.S. attempt to seize the vessel, potentially defusing tensions between London and Tehran as a British-flagged tanker remains held by the Islamic Republic.

The release of the Grace 1 comes amid a growing confrontation between Iran and the West after U.S. President Donald Trump pulled Washington out of Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers over a year ago.

In past weeks, the Persian Gulf region has seen six attacks on oil tankers that the U.S. has blamed on Iran and the downing of a U.S. surveillance drone by Iranian forces. Iran denied it was behind the tanker attacks, although it has seized other tankers.

Gibraltar Chief Minister Fabian Picardo said the U.S. was still on time to request a new legal procedure for seizing the Grace 1, but that provisions under the European Union's sanctions regulations were ending Thursday after the Iranian government assured him in writing that the ship will not send its 2.1 million barrels of crude to a sanctioned entity in Syria.

Reacting to the developments, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif accused the U.S. of trying to "steal our property on the high seas."

"Having failed to accomplish its objectives through its #EconomicTerrorism — including depriving cancer patients of medicine — the US attempted to abuse the legal system to steal our property on the high seas," Zarif tweeted, calling the Trump administration's moves a "piracy attempt."

It was not clear whether the Grace 1 would sail away immediately; nor was it known what the Trump's administration strategy was. The U.S. Justice Department did not respond to requests for comment.

"This is an important material change in the destination of the vessel and the beneficiary of its cargo," Gibraltar's Picardo said in a statement, adding that the move ensured that the Syrian government of President Bashar Assad would be deprived of more than $140 million of crude oil.

Gibraltar said it had "solid documentary evidence" that the vessel was bound for Syria when it was detained on July 4, but that the political fallout had prompted talks with Iranian officials in London.

Picardo's office released copies of communications with the Syrian Embassy in the U.K. shortly after the British overseas territory's Supreme Court decision to release the tanker.

The court had delayed its decision after the Justice Department made a last-minute application to extend the detention of the oil tanker, the Gibraltar government had said earlier Thursday. But there was no U.S. application to the court when the hearing resumed in the afternoon, the Gibraltar Chronicle newspaper reported, quoting the court's chief justice, Anthony Dudley.

Picardo said that any U.S. request to detain the Grace 1 would now to be examined under bilateral agreements and outside of the EU sanction mechanism.

The EU has endorsed U.N. sanctions against Syria and has imposed a broad range of its own restrictions against Assad's government and its supporters. The restrictions include an oil embargo, limits on certain type of investments and a freeze of Syria's central bank's assets in the EU, among others.

In May, it extended until mid-2020 travel bans and the freezing of assets of 269 individuals and 69 entities. Among them is listed the Banyas refinery where the Grace 1's cargo was allegedly headed on July 4 when it was seized in a British Royal Navy operation in the Strait of Gibraltar.

Shortly after that, Iran seized the British-flagged oil tanker Stena Impero, which remains held by the Islamic Republic. Analysts had said the release of the Grace 1 by Gibraltar could see the Stena Impero go free.



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WORLD

Missile explosion in Russia raises questions

By Vladimir Isachenkov
Associated Press

MOSCOW — A deadly explosion at a naval weapons testing range in northwestern Russia. A brief spike in radiation levels. An evacuation order issued, then rescinded, for a nearby village.

Last week's mysterious accident on the White Sea, along with changing or contradictory information from Russian authorities, has led to speculation about what happened and what type of weapon was involved, and has even raised comparisons to the 1986 disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

What is known and unknown about the Aug. 8 incident in the Russian region of Arkhangelsk:

■ **The secret testing range:** A testing range was set up near the village of Nyonoksa, about 615 miles north of Moscow on the White Sea in 1954, when the Soviet Union's missile program was still in its nascent phase. It has served as the main ground for testing a variety of missiles used by the Soviet and then Russian navy ever since.

They included anti-ship and anti-aircraft missiles of various types, as well as intercontinental ballistic missiles intended for the nation's nuclear submarines.

The authorities have routinely closed various parts of the White Sea's Dvina Bay to navigation during missile tests, and the approximately 500 residents of Nyonoksa have regularly been asked to temporarily leave their homes, usually for a few hours at a time, apparently as a routine precaution during military activity.

The area has been off-limits to the outsiders, but tourists who ask for advance permission have been allowed to visit Nyonoksa, the site of a beautiful 18th-century wooden church.

The village is connected by rail to Severodvinsk, a city of 183,000 people about 19 miles to the east.

■ **The explosion:** First word of the explosion came from the Russian Defense Ministry, which initially said the Aug. 8 blast of a liquid-propellant rocket engine killed two people and injured six others. It said in a statement that no radiation had been released, although the city administration in Severodvinsk reported a brief rise in radiation levels — a contradiction that recalled Soviet-era cover-ups of disasters like Chernobyl.

Two days later, Russia's state-controlled nuclear agency Rosatom acknowledged that the explosion occurred on an offshore platform during tests of a "nuclear isotope power source," and that it killed five nuclear engineers and injured three others. It's still not clear whether those casualties were in addition to the earlier dead and injured.

Russian authorities then closed part of Dvina Bay to shipping for a month, an apparent attempt to keep outsiders from seeing an operation to recover the missile debris.

On Monday, the five engineers were buried in Sarov, a city that hosts Russia's main nuclear weapons research center.

■ **The radiation:** The city administration in Severodvinsk, which has a huge shipyard that builds nuclear submarines, said the radiation levels there rose to 2 microsieverts per hour — approximately 20 times the area's average reading — for about 30 minutes on Aug. 8. It then returned to the area's average natural level of 0.1 microsieverts per hour.

Emergency officials issued a warning to all workers to stay indoors and close the windows. Frightened residents rushed to buy iodine, which can help reduce risks from exposure to radiation.

A later report from Russia's state weather and environmental monitoring agency said the peak radiation reading in Severodvinsk on Aug. 8 was 1.78 microsieverts per hour in just one neighborhood — about 16 times the average. Peak readings in other parts of Severodvinsk varied between 0.45 and 1.33 microsieverts per hour. It said that radiation levels fell back to normal after 2½ hours.

The brief increase in radiation didn't pose any health dangers, authorities said. The recorded peak levels were indeed lower than the cosmic radiation that plane passengers are exposed to on longer flights or doses that patients get during some medical scans.

The authorities haven't registered any increase in radiation since then. Local emergency officials also said ground samples from around the area revealed no trace of radioactive contamination.

On Monday, Nyonoksa residents were asked to leave the village for several hours, causing new worries. The order was quickly rescinded by the military, who said they canceled the activities at the range that had warranted the initial evacuation order.

Arkhangelsk region Gov. Igor Orlov said, "There is no evacuation," and he claimed that some reports about the incident sought to sow panic.

■ **The mystery missile:** Neither the Defense Ministry nor Rosatom identified the type of weapon that exploded during the test.

Rosatom's statement said the explosion occurred during tests of a "nuclear isotope power source," which led observers to conclude it was the "Burevestnik" or "Storm Petrel," a nuclear-powered cruise missile. NATO has code-named the missile "Skyfall."

The missile was first revealed by Russian President Vladimir Putin in his 2018 state-of-the-nation address, along with other doomsday weapons.

President Donald Trump backed that theory Monday, tweeting, "The Russian 'Skyfall' explosion has people worried about the air around the facility, and far beyond. Not good!" Trump added that "the United States is learning much from the failed missile explosion in Russia. We have similar, though more advanced, technology."

Both the U.S. and the Soviet Union worked on nuclear-powered missiles in the 1960s, but they abandoned such designs as too unstable and dangerous to operate.

When he spoke about the prospective nuclear-powered cruise missile, Putin claimed it will have an unlimited range, allowing it to circle the globe undetected by missile defense systems. He said the missile had successfully undergone the first tests, but many observers have remained skeptical, arguing that such a weapon could be very difficult to handle and pose a threat to the environment.



PHOTOS BY SERGEI YAKOVLEV/AP



Above: Residents dressed in folk costumes walk through a street during a folk festival in the northwestern village of Nyonoksa, Russia, in October. Left: A billboard that reads "The State Central Navy Testing Range" is seen near residential buildings in Nyonoksa. The explosion of a rocket engine at the Russian navy's testing range just outside Nyonoksa last week led to a brief spike in radiation levels.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police: Man broke into hotel, showered, stole TV

NM LAS VEGAS — A northern New Mexico man faces charges after authorities said he broke into a hotel room and took a shower before stealing a television.

The Las Vegas Optic reported Ignacio Gallegos was recently arrested following reports of a man leaving the Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas with a TV.

Las Vegas Police said Gallegos, 30, broke into the hotel room, apparently took a shower, then removed a 50-inch television from the wall.

Gallegos is facing commercial burglary and larceny charges.

Charity swim rerouted after sharks spotted

MA PROVINCETOWN — An increase in the number of great white sharks around Cape Cod has forced a longtime Massachusetts charity swim race to be rerouted.

The Cape Cod Times reported that Cape Cod National Seashore officials denied a permit for the 32nd annual Swim for Life & Paddler Flotilla. The race was originally slated to start off Long Point Beach in Provincetown Harbor.

Agency superintendent Brian Carlstrom said the agency made the decision out of an abundance of caution.

The rerouted Sept. 7 race will be closer to shore.

Injured baby raccoon walks with wheelchair

AR LITTLE ROCK — A baby raccoon with a brain injury that hinders her mobility is walking again in Arkansas with the help of a wheelchair.

Walkin' Pets, which makes wheelchairs for animals, said the source of Vittles' injury is unknown, but it prevented her from balancing and supporting herself. Susan Curtis is a wildlife rehabilitation specialist who helps the state's bats and raccoons. The company said Curtis found Vittles when she was 8 weeks old.

Walkin' Pets project manager Jennifer Pratt said the wheelchair will adjust as Vittles grows. The company said Vittles can use the wheelchair to sharpen her balance and stability so she can walk on her own.

Police: Woman drove 10 miles the wrong way

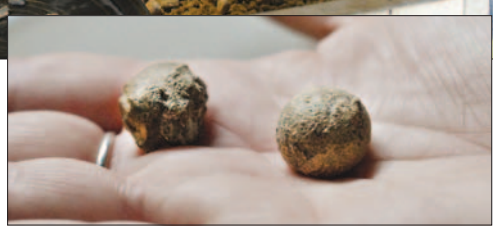
NH MANCHESTER — State police in New Hampshire said a 22-year-old woman is facing multiple charges after she allegedly drove the wrong way for 10 miles on a state highway, even going through a toll plaza in the wrong direction.

Police said the vehicle driven by Rachel Barris of Hollis continued traveling northbound on the wrong side of F.E. Everett Turnpike.

She entered Interstate 293 before eventually going into Manchester. Along the way, Barris passed the wrong way through Bedford toll plaza.

Police say Barris was charged with driving while intoxicated and reckless conduct.





Digging up history

Above: Greg Dimmick, left, Jason Vandervort and Sol Garza sift through dirt during an archaeological survey in the Long Barrack on the Alamo grounds in San Antonio on Tuesday. Right: Musket balls possibly dating from the 1800s are among items found. The ball on the left has been shot.

PHOTOS BY BILLY CALZADA, SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS/AP

State liquor stores top $1B in revenue

VA RICHMOND — Virginia's state-owned liquor stores had another record-breaking year and topped $1 billion in revenues.

Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority officials attributed the increase in part to customers buying more top shelf liquor than in the past. Irish whiskey was up 15%, tequila at 14% and bourbon at 10%.

Tito's Handmade domestic vodka was the number one seller for the second year in a row.

Man arrested on 12th drunken driving offense

WI EAU CLAIRE — Police said a man found passed out behind the wheel at an Eau Claire gas station faces his 12th drunken driving charge.

WQOW-TV reported Keith Bondie, 60, appeared in Eau Claire County Circuit Court where bond was set at $10,000 cash. The Elk Mound man was arrested at the Kwik Trip. First responders told police they were unable to wake Bondie. He eventually got out of the car after officers arrived.

Bondie was charged with his 12th offense operating while intoxicated and driving with a revoked license.

THE CENSUS

500 **The approximate number of exotic animals that will get new homes after** officials announced a Southern California sanctuary will shut down. The Los Angeles Times reported that the board of directors of the Wildlife Waystation in the Angeles National Forest voted to close after 43 years. A Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman said the sanctuary suffered extensive damage in a 2017 wildfire and during severe flooding earlier this year. Nearly 470 animals, including lions, tigers, alligators, wolves and 42 chimpanzees, will be relocated.

Thomas the train to deliver school supplies

MI FLINT — More than 1,000 pounds of school supplies were headed to the Flint area along with characters from the popular children's show "Thomas & Friends."

Thomas the Tank Engine and Sir Topham Hatt were scheduled to arrive at Crossroads Village & Huckleberry Railroad in Flint.

The school supplies are for Cummings and Educare, two pre-kindergarten programs created to combat possible developmental delays following Flint's crisis with lead-tainted water. Elevated lead levels can cause such delays and other health problems.

The supplies were collected at "Day Out with Thomas" events across the country and by the United Way of Genesee County.

Firework from event lands inside home

WY GILLETTE — Officials said a firework rocket that was launched during a show for the Pyrotechnics Guild International convention landed in a Wyoming home and sparked a small fire.

The Gillette News Record reported the rocket broke through the roof of the Gillette home about 2 miles from the event center where the fireworks display was taking place.

The Campbell County Fire Department said the flames were extinguished before firefighters got to the house. No one was injured.

Guild spokesman Tom Sklebar says the organization will pay for the damages.

Ex-theme park worker accused of stealing

FL ORLANDO — Authorities said a 28-year-old former worker at Walt Disney World's Typhoon Lagoon stole cash, credit cards, gift cards and other items from an employee locker room at the water park.

An Orange County Sheriff's Office arrest affidavit said Shariel Agosto knew how to navigate the behind the scenes area of the water park. She is accused of using the cash and credit cards to buy gas for her car, food at a restaurant and of attempting to purchase $250 in alcohol.

The Orlando Sentinel reported Agosto was arrested Aug. 1 on charges including unlawful possession of a stolen credit card and petit theft.

From wire reports







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BUSINESS/WEATHER

US bond market senses recession as stress rises

By Stan Choe
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Compared to the free-swinging and sometimes emotional stock market, the bond market is supposed to be the sober and measured one.

It's getting more alarmed.

Bonds sounded their loudest warning bell yet of recession on Wednesday, when the yield on the 10-year Treasury briefly fell below the two-year yield. Such a thing is rare: Investors usually demand more in interest for tying up their money in longer-term debt. When yields get "inverted," market watchers say a recession may be a year or two away.

An inverted yield curve has historically been a reliable, though not perfect, predictor of recession. Each of the last five recessions was preceded by the two- and 10-year Treasury yields inverting, according to Raymond James, taking an average of about 22 months for recession to hit. The last inversion of this part of the yield curve began in December 2005, two years before the Great Recession tore through the global economy.

This latest inversion is the result of a steep slide in long-term yields as worries mount that President Donald Trump's trade war may derail the economy. Discouraging economic data from Germany and China, two of the world's largest economies, also unnerved investors on Wednesday.

The temporary flip in yields sent stocks sliding, and the S&P 500 was down as much as 2.7% in the afternoon. The bond market has been much more pessimistic about the health of the economy in recent months than the stock market, which set a record high just last month.

If all the talk about yield curves sounds familiar, it should. Other parts of the curve have already inverted, beginning late last year. But each time, some market watchers cautioned not to make too much of it.

In December, for example, the yield on the five-year Treasury dropped below the two- and three-year Treasury yields. It wasn't a big deal at the time because academics and economists pay much more attention to the relationship between three-month yields and 10-year yields.

When the three-month yield rose above the 10-year yield earlier this year, it drew more attention. But traders said the inversion would need to last a while to confirm the warning signal, and they pointed out that the widely followed gap between the two-year yield and the 10-year yield was still positive.

Now, that tripwire has been crossed too, and the three-month Treasury yield remains above the 10-year yield.

One of the biggest concerns is that all the uncertainty around the U.S.-China trade war — where the world's hopes of a resolution can rise and fall with a single tweet or statement — may cause businesses and shoppers to wait things out and rein in their spending. Such a pullback could hurt corporate profits and start a vicious cycle where companies cut back on hiring, leading to further cutbacks in spending and more damage for the economy.

The concerns have sent the 30-year Treasury yield sinking, and it touched a record low Wednesday. But it remains above shorter-term yields, which means not all of the yield curve is inverted and offers a bit of solace. The 30-year yield sat at 2.04% Wednesday afternoon, above the 1.58% 10-year yield and the 1.56% two-year yield.

Some market watchers also say the yield curve may be less reliable an indicator this time because of technical factors that are distorting yields. Bonds in Europe and elsewhere have even lower yields than U.S. bonds and are negative in many cases. That's sending buyers from abroad into the U.S. bond market, putting extra pressure downward on U.S. yields.



Richard Drew/AP

Trader Gregory Rowe works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on July 30. An economic alarm bell is sounding in the U.S. and sending warnings of a potential recession.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

Euro costs (Aug. 16)	$1.1434
Dollar buys (Aug. 16)	€0.8746
British pound (Aug. 16)	$1.24
Japanese yen (Aug. 16)	104.00
South Korean won (Aug. 16)	1,182.00

Commercial rates

Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	$1.2122
Canada (Dollar)	1.3320
China (Yuan)	7.0408
Denmark (Krone)	6.7139
Egypt (Pound)	16.5899
Euro	$1.1110/0.9001
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8419
Hungary (Forint)	293.00
Israel (Shekel)	3.5241
Japan (Yen)	106.27
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3042
Norway (Krone)	9.0287
Philippines (Peso)	52.76
Poland (Zloty)	3.94
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7507
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3890
South Korea (Won)	1,215.12
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9771
Thailand (Baht)	30.83
Turkey (Lira)	5.5727

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.25
Discount rate	2.75
Federal funds market rate	2.12
3-month bill	1.91
30-year bond	2.02

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	$2.890	$3.276	$3.532	$3.277
Change in price	-6.4 cents	-5.2 cents	-5.1 cents	-2.1 cents
Netherlands	--	$3.788	$4.000	$3.872
Change in price	--	-13.7 cents	-13.3 cents	-10.0 cents
U.K.	--	$3.210	$3.446	$3.211
Change in price	--	-5.2 cents	-5.1 cents	-2.1 cents
Azores	--	--	$3.453	--
Change in price	--	--	-5.1 cents	--
Belgium	--	$2.878	$2.991	$3.107
Change in price	--	No change	No change	No change
Turkey	--	--	$3.349	$3.094*
Change in price	--	--	-5.1 cents	-2.1 cents

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	--	$3.3.19	--	$3.069
Change in price	--	-5.0 cents	--	-2.0 cents
Okinawa	$2.679	--	--	$3.069
Change in price	-6.0 cents	--	--	-2.0 cents
South Korea	$2.709	--	$3.349	$3.099
Change in price	-6.0 cents	--	-5.0 cents	-2.0 cents
Guam	$2.689**	$3.069	$3.329	--
Change in price	-6.0 cents	-6.0 cents	-5.0 cents	--

*** Diesel EFD ** Midgrade**
For the week of Aug. 16 - 22

MARKET WATCH

Aug. 14, 2019

Dow Jones industrials	-800.49	25,479.42
Nasdaq composite	-242.42	7,773.94
Standard & Poor's 500	-85.72	2,840.60
Russell 2000	-43.06	1,467.52

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

WEEKEND



Call of Duty: Modern Warfare

Video games, Page 26

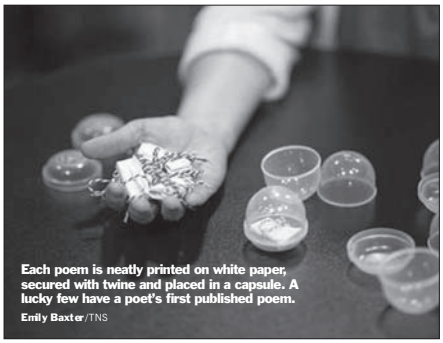
Growin' Up

An English teen finds a working-class hero in 'Blinded by the Light,' an ode to Springsteen and the transformative power of music

Movies, Page 24

Travel — 27-34 Music — 36-37 Books — 38 Fitness — 40 Crossword — 42

WEEKEND: GADGETS



Each poem is neatly printed on white paper, secured with twine and placed in a capsule. A lucky few have a poet's first published poem.
Emily Baxter/TNS

Poems for sale

Vending machines raise money, awareness for writers in prison

By Rick Nelson
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Like many inspired ideas, this one began with an Instagram post.

Jennifer Bowen Hicks was flipping through the social media site when her eye stopped on an image from Portugal. A small portion of the photo depicted a vending machine. Rather thaan dispensing snack-size bags of Doritos, it was selling poems.

About a year later, the picture popped back into her mind as she was thinking about fundraising possibilities for the Minnesota Prison Writing Workshop (MPWW), the nonprofit she founded in 2011.

That memory led to the purchase of five hand-cranked vending machines now found in some Minnesota bookstores.

Insert a pair of quarters into the slots, give the handle a twist and out pops a plastic container with a thought-provoking poem.

The poems, all previously published, draw from a wide range of sources: famous (and not-so-famous) poets, plus MPWW instructors and the incarcerated students, too.

Each is neatly printed on white paper, carefully rolled up and then tied with colorful twine — that last touch suggested by a member of her writers collective — and placed inside a plastic capsule. Those who discover a poem wrapped with a red silk ribbon have hit the MPWW jackpot: it's the poet's first published poem.

The hands-on process of printing, packaging and delivery is managed by volunteers ("Bless them all," said Bowen Hicks). The group is taking a long view on the machines' financial prospects.

Each analog-era vending machine costs $180. Add to that shipping costs. And printer ink doesn't come cheap.

"Just when we're feeling cocky, it's time to order more ink," said Bowen Hicks.

"We're not making a lot of money, yet," she said. "Right now, it's a little better than breaking even."

Last year's holiday shopping season proved to be an unexpected boon for the poetry project.

"People were buying them for stocking stuffers," she said. "The demand was creating poetry emergencies. We had to get our elves back to the rolling table."

What eventually became the MPWW grew out of a creative writing class that Bowen Hicks conducted at the medium-security prison at Lino Lakes.

"It was the only state facility where the warden responded to my email," she said. Seven men enrolled.

"We really clicked," she said. "I didn't want to leave after the class, I was so inspired."

Eventually, she invited other writers on the outside to participate. Today, hundreds of incarcerated students sign up for nearly 30 classes a year led by more than 25 instructors, whose experience and background runs the gamut.

"We have poets, fiction writers, playwrights, you name it," said Bowen Hicks. "I'm interviewing a songwriter the day after tomorrow."

In eight years, the nonprofit has grown to serve every one of Minnesota's state-run adult prisons, and students are immersed in every literary genre, from fiction to memoir, playwriting to poetry.

"Our work benefits the people in prison, but in so many ways I feel like it's the other way around," said Bowen Hicks.

ON THE COVER: Viveik Kalra and Nell Williams star in "Blinded by the Light," about a young Pakistani-British teen in 1980s-era Britain.
Warner Bros. Entertainment

GADGET WATCH

Thermometer good for grillers

By Gregg Ellman
Tribune News Service

The kitchen and I have never been the best of friends. Since my wife is an awesome cook, my assignment for bigger meals is grilling and if there's one thing she won't tolerate, it's bringing something undercooked to the table.

When I tried the MEATER, a wireless smart meat thermometer, a few years ago, my undercooked grilling issues were solved. Now, the company has taken wireless-cooking temperature control to a new level with the recent launch of the four-probe MEATER Block.

If you have never used a wireless cooking device, have no fear. The setup is simple and with the well-written quick-start manual, you'll be cooking in minutes.

It works on Wi-Fi or in standalone mode. The standalone mode does not require a smartphone or tablet; instead, the information is sent and displayed on the MEATER Block.

The block (5.1-by-1.5-by-6.1 inches) has a responsive touch interface, an easy-to-read OLED display and built-in speakers to sound alerts. It's powered by four AA batteries or USB power for about 50 hours to charge the probes. When charged, each probe will last about 24 hours on a single charge.

The system has four cooking probes; each has an engraved identification number on the top to display the temperature.

After your grill or oven is preheated and your food is ready for cooking, insert a probe into the thickest area of the meat. The probes make a Bluetooth connection from the grill or inside the oven to the MEATER Block to relay the temperature, with a maximum cooking setting of 212 degrees Fahrenheit. All four probes can be used simultaneously in different meats.

Using it in Wi-Fi mode, the free companion app (iOS and Android) on your smartphone or tablet reads and displays temperatures for internal, target and ambient along with the remaining cooking time. You can set up alerts, alarms and notifications, which are incredibly helpful if you get distracted by a game on TV while cooking — not that that would ever happen to me.

The app is loaded with great features including, cooking presets, videos and tutorials and MEATER cloud access.

Along with the stellar performance, Apption Labs put a lot of time, attention and detail into the packing and presentation of the MEATER Block, which comes with a bamboo storage box. Just another way to assure customers that they purchased an excellent, high-end product.

Online: meater.com; $269



Apption Labs/TNS

Above: The four-probe MEATER Block works on Wi-Fi or in standalone mode. Below: The MEATER comes in a nice bamboo storage box.





Soul Electronics' **ST-XS2 lightweight wireless earbuds** are a fine addition to the company's line of solid-sounding devices.

I can write about wireless earbuds weekly and still get asked about the concept since they're relatively new and unknown to many.

These small earbuds work via Bluetooth 5.0, requiring no cords. There's not even a place to plug a cord.

After turning on the earbuds and making the initial connection, every connection after that should be automatic.

The 6mm earbuds charge in the included case. I tested them on an Apple Music decades station, blasting away at 32,000 feet at high volume with great clarity.

The sound is perfect with Soul's incorporated, transparent audio mode, which allows background sounds to penetrate through the earbuds, providing increased awareness of surroundings for safe listening no matter where you are.

They're constructed with industry-leading IPX7 waterproof rating, which makes them great for use during sweaty workouts. Soul rates them to be durable in up to 3 feet of water.

One thing I loved is that the charging case uses a fast-charging USB-C connection. More devices are switching to this; I hope it will be an industry standard soon.

The case is good for 25 total hours of charging with 5 hours needed for each charge.

Included are various sizes of ear tips, a charging cable, ergonomic C-shaped ear hooks and a carabiner to attach to the case. Microphones are in the earbuds for hands-free calls.

SoulElectronics.com; $99.99, available in matte black, navy blue, pure white and sakura pink



The ST-XS2 lightweight wireless earbuds charge in their case.
Soul Electronics/TNS



ILLUSTRATION BY SEAN MOORES/Stars and Stripes

The enduring strangeness of Nicolas Cage

BY TERRY NGUYEN
The Washington Post

There's a scene in the 1989 film "Never on Tuesday," where a young, prosthetic-nosed Nicolas Cage emerges from a swerving red sports car. He's lanky and cartoonish, like a real-life Hotel Transylvania character. He speaks two lines in an exceptionally weird voice, laughs like a maniac and promptly drives off.

Thirty years later, Cage's uncredited cameo in the film went viral on Twitter. "Do Oscar nominations have a statute of limitations???" someone tweeted. That's how Cage manages to stay lodged in the public consciousness. Sure, the actor has also done 20 films in the past two years. But can you name two of them? No, the legend of Nic Cage seems to exist outside of any particular film or role, sustained by the memorably memeable facial expressions and performances that have helped him achieve cult status on the internet.

And yet Cage, 55, planted the seeds of that legend the old-fashioned way: by taking a lot of different roles and being a great interview when the magazines and talk shows came calling. He has starred in gonzo action flicks and quiet indie films, playing a curiously diverse range of characters, and with each new movie release came a fresh round of media coverage. Every few years without fail, audiences get an exaggerated glimpse of Cage's eccentric lifestyle, often from the actor himself.

A 1986 Los Angeles Times profile of Cage, then 22, revealed that he has an affinity for marine animals: He owned a baby pet octopus and two large aquariums filled with sea creatures. (There's a rumor that he once bought a $150,000 octopus to help him with his acting.)

The 2010s marked a ripe decade for bizarre Cage stories. While promoting "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" in 2010, Cage told David Letterman that he once took magic mushrooms with his Burmese cat Lewis. During a media tour for "Trespass" in 2011, Cage said that he confronted a naked invader eating a Fudgsicle in his house. For another 2011 thriller, "Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance," he said he drew acting inspiration from his pet cobra. (The disclosure freaked out his neighbors, and Cage has since re-homed his two king cobras at a zoo.)

In 2015, the actor returned a stolen Mongolian dinosaur skull that he purchased for $276,000 at a 2007 auction.

In a recent interview with the New York Times, Cage again enthralled the internet by bolstering his credentials as Hollywood's weirdo laureate. Here are some highlights:

His relationship with Johnny Depp

Cage said that he rented out an old building in Hollywood to Depp and that the two were "good friends." At the time, according to Cage, Depp wanted to be a musician and claimed that he couldn't act. Cage said he sent Depp to meet with his agent to audition for "A Nightmare on Elm Street," a role that Depp secured.

His quest for the Holy Grail

Cage went on a self-proclaimed "grail quest," likening it to a "National Treasure"-like adventure. "You read a book, and in it there's a reference to another book, and then you buy that book, and then you attach the references," Cage said. He even went to the Chalice Well in Glastonbury, England, and Rhode Island to search for the Holy Grail. The outcome of the quest depends on how you interpret Cage's ultimate realization: "What is the grail but earth itself?"

Prince, primal-screaming and therapy

In April, a clip of Cage rage-singing "Purple Rain" at a karaoke bar went viral online. It coincided with his four-day marriage to girlfriend Erika Koike in Las Vegas and the consequent annulment. The actor likened his rendition of the Prince song to "primal-scream therapy," stating that his goal wasn't to sing, but to scream. With regard to clinical therapy, Cage said that he hasn't gone for at least 20 years. There were benefits, he said, but there was a point where he would look at his therapist and think: "Why am I talking to you? I'm more interesting than you."

As far as his "Never on Tuesday" cameo, Cage has proved that there is no expiration date on his ability to supplement an acting performance with an oddball anecdote. In an interview this week with Vulture, he talked about his three-decades-ago role as a large-nosed motorist — including a behind-the-scenes tidbit about parts of his performance that got cut from the film. (It involves his character screaming "Pinocchio!" multiple times.)

Cage was tickled by the fact that the clip went viral. "I've been fortunate!" he told Vulture. "I've found this group of fans that does see the humor in the things that I do."

WEEKEND: MOVIES

Born to write

'Blinded by the Light' uses the music of Bruce Springsteen to tell journalist's story

By Peter Sblendorio
New York Daily News

"Blinded by the Light" is where the Jersey Shore meets the British countryside, all to a soundtrack by Bruce Springsteen.

The new film provides a window into the world of an English teen of Pakistani descent as he struggles to follow his dream of becoming a writer with inspiration provided by lyrics from the Boss. Springsteen's messages of struggle, hope and redemption in songs like "The River" and "Born to Run" speak to the youth as he grapples with racism in 1987 and a traditional father who pushes him to pursue a more practical career.

"He's somebody who talks about the things that actually matter in life," said journalist Sarfraz Manzoor, whose 2007 memoir, "Greetings from Bury Park," inspired the movie.

"It doesn't matter where you live, which country or what decade, there's probably a chance that you're not living the life you want in the town you grew up in," he told the Daily News. "There's probably a chance that you and your dad don't get on. There's probably a chance that you got a good friend, and friendship means something to you and your mate."

In the movie, Viveik Kalra stars as Javed — a character based on Manzoor.

Javed, who lives in the English town of Luton, is reluctant to share his poems with the world until a classmate introduces him to Springsteen's body of work. The words to songs like "Dancing in the Dark" and "Badlands" illustrate Javed's struggle while motivating him to strive for better.

The New Jersey-born Springsteen allowed the filmmakers to use 19 of his songs at a discounted rate.



Manzoor

"We just made a little indie film, and ... it's sort of an amazing way to think about (Springsteen) because his words and his music is incredibly valuable, but I think he must have seen something," Kalra, 21, said. "Our story has a lot of heart to it, and a lot of soul, and comes from a deeper place than anything sort of surface level."

Manzoor, 48, remains a massive Springsteen fan and has seen the Boss in concert more than 150 times.

While making the movie, Manzoor sent the script to Springsteen, who didn't recommend a single change. Director Gurinder Chadha eventually showed Springsteen the film last summer, sitting behind the rocker as he watched.

"At the end of the movie, there was absolute silence," Chadha, 59, told The News. "He didn't say anything. ... Just as I was going to get my tape, Bruce walked over to me and he put his arms around me and he gave me a big kiss and he said, 'Wow, thank you for looking after me so beautifully.'"



WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT/AP

In "Blinded by the Light," Viveik Kalra plays Javed, a Pakistani-British teen whose life is transformed when a friend introduces him to Bruce Springsteen's music.

For all the uplifting parts of the movie, there are also moments of darkness. Scenes involving the far-right National Front marching and fomenting violence serve as a reminder of the intolerance that existed.

"When I was growing up, I had the obstacle of my parents, as in they didn't think I could do anything interesting because they didn't know anybody who was," Manzoor said. "But then you also had an obstacle that people were judging you for things that weren't in your control.

"I can't control the color of my skin. I can't control the religion I was born in. I can't control my name, and yet those things are going to prevent me from becoming the person I want to become."

Those involved with the movie believe the world's current social climate make "Blinded by the Light" feel especially relevant. The Brexit movement in England really made Chadha want to make the film.

"Brexit happened, and I was so upset with all the xenophobia that I saw around me at that time," she recalled. "I said, 'I've got to do something about this. I've got to present a different version of the world as I see it.'"

The movie also highlights an important lesson about family through Javed's disagreements with his dad, echoing the young Springsteen's head-butting with his father Douglas.

"(The message is) to respect and love people that you have differences with and find a way to communicate and navigate those relationships in a way that doesn't cut those people off from your life," Kalra explained. "Because often they want the best for you."

'Blinded by the Light' may be the feel-good movie of the summer

By Ann Hornaday
The Washington Post

Arriving like a fresh gust of wind off the Jersey Shore during a largely torpid summer, "Blinded by the Light" goes one better than the jukebox musicals that have played like barely warmed-over nostalgia buffets and gives the audience something to chew on. Warm, funny, humane and deeply sincere, this ode to Bruce Springsteen, breaking free and belonging isn't content merely to revel in Springsteen's greatest hits — although it does. The movie also delves into the singular power of music, and by extension art itself, to make its audience feel comprehended.

We meet Javed (Viveik Kalra) in 1987 as a teenager living in Luton, England, where he and his Pakistani family emigrated years earlier. Javed has grown up in a strict patriarchal Muslim household that favors obedience and discipline above such frivolous values as self-expression. Feeling like an outsider in his own home, Javed takes refuge in the music of the era (Madness and the Pet Shop Boys) and aspires to write Brit-poppy songs himself. Some days, he feels just as English as he is Pakistani. Others, he feels like an outsider in both cultures.

"Blinded by the Light" traces Javed's efforts to separate from his family and find himself, as he discovers Springsteen's music.

When Javed listens to "Dancing in the Dark" for the first time, director Gurinder Chadha stages the sequence like a musical, with dramatic thunder and lightning, projecting the lyrics across the screen. She takes similar liberties throughout a film that develops its own appealing rhythm, setting pivotal episodes in Javed's growth to such classics as "Backstreets," "The River," "Badlands" and "Thunder Road."

At first, Javed's mates can't believe he's converted to dad rock. But "Blinded by the Light" isn't about music snobbery or idol worship as much as instinctively gravitating toward someone else's voice and, in the process, discovering your own. In Javed's case, his feelings of frustration, pent-up anger, filial rebellion and thwartedness are precise analogues to the seething emotions of longing and liberation that Springsteen has always poured into his lyrics.

Kalra, who makes his feature debut here, plays Javed with quiet, hangdog earnestness that earns the viewer's trust and empathy almost instantly. The coming-of-age beats in "Blinded by the Light" aren't necessarily new; Chadha herself already created a classic of the form with "Bend It Like Beckham." But she's done it again here in a whole new way, using an entirely different cinematic language that captures Javed's fraught interior journey with equal parts stylized whimsy and shared anguish.



WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT/AP

"Blinded by the Light" is a heartfelt ode to the promise of youth and the transformative power of music. Starring Viveik Kalra.

"Blinded by the Light" is enormous fun, especially when it's gently mocking '80s-era technology and Flock of Seagulls haircuts. But a vein of melancholy runs through the movie, echoed in Chadha's preferred palette of blues, teals and aquas, that is only underscored when Javed considers leaving England entirely and going west, like all dream-driven young people. "No one cares where you're from in America," he says, delivering a line that conveys enough idealism and dashed-hopes irony to have been written by the Boss of us all himself.

"Blinded by the Light" is rated PG-13 for mature thematic material and strong language. Running time: 114 minutes.

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

"Blinded by the Light" isn't a new tune, but it's sung with an infectious passion and it captures something sincere about the globe-spanning, life-changing influence of great pop music. With headphones and the right music, anyone can become born to run.
— Jake Coyle/AP

Other than a few blips, "Blinded by the Light" is a production that is as strong as any Springsteen anthem and as inspiring as any lyrics by the Boss.
— Rick Bentley
Tribune News Service

"Blinded by the Light" can be embarrassingly hokey, though that's part of its charm. The makeshift musical numbers are endearing, though there are some weirdly implausible moments.
— Rafer Guzman
Newsday

WEEKEND: MOVIES

‘Good Boys’ is a hilarious coming-of-age tale

By Katie Walsh
Tribune News Service



Universal Pictures

Bad decisions lead a trio of sixth graders (from left, Keith L. Williams, Jacob Tremblay and Brady Noon) down a comical path of age-inappropriate misadventures in “Good Boys.”

Gene Stupnitsky and Lee Eisenberg’s raucous tweenage comedy “Good Boys” dives into the sordid, silly world of sex, drugs and middle school. It’s a film about a specific time, that oh-so-short moment when the world of adults permeates a kid’s consciousness, ill-equipped to process or understand any of it, try as they might. Stupnitsky and Eisenberg have deftly mined this space for laughs, and the seasoned comedy vets (“The Office,” “Year One,” “Bad Teacher”) deliver a joke-dense and highly original coming-of-age tale that’s sweet and sour in all the best ways.

Bean Bag Boys Max (Jacob Tremblay), Thor (Brady Noon) and Lucas (Keith L. Williams) are at the age where their vocabulary has far outpaced their growth spurts. The trio of longtime best friends swears up a blue streak while wildly misinterpreting the sex terminology they use, and they’re still deeply programmed by D.A.R.E. and other kid-friendly anti-drug campaigns. “Drugs ruin lives and communities,” Max parrots in a panic when they discover the purse they’ve snatched from his teenage neighbor Hannah (Molly Gordon) contains party drugs. Yet Max is determined to go to his first “kissing party,” where he hopes to smooch his crush, Brixlee (Millie Davis).

Welcome to the awkward phase, where growing up is a temporal minefield of navigating friendships, relationships, parents and bullies, all while enduring an onslaught of new and confounding information, social pressures and hormones. Will the Bean Bag Boys make it out alive?

That becomes increasingly questionable over the course of a single day, wherein the boys have to trade Hannah her drugs for Max’s dad’s drone, which they crashed in her yard while trying to learn about kissing (naturally). Hand off the drugs, get the drone, avoid getting grounded, go to the kissing party, achieve popularity, marry your sixth-grade crush. That’s how it works, right? This odyssey through mean girls, frat houses, sex toys, tired cops and six-lane freeways proves to be the boys’ first lesson in the epic complications and moments of serendipity life always throws your way.

Eisenberg and Stupnitsky co-wrote the film, while Stupnitsky makes his feature directorial debut, and the two have crafted three incredibly well-drawn and detailed characters in the titular boys, brought to life by a trio of charming performers. It’s fun to watch Tremblay stretch his wings into a role that has a bit more bite. But his costars are the breakouts, particularly Williams as the honest-to-a-fault, nervous nelly Lucas, the most childlike of the pals (though he looks the oldest). Lucas loves rules and telling the truth and often emits high-pitched screams. Thor, with his gelled hair and earring, is desperate to be cool. His desire for popularity, and to escape middle school without an embarrassing nickname, eclipses his own identity.

This is a film about how friendships function within shifting identities and changing times. But above all else, “Good Boys” is just an incredibly funny, laugh-a-minute movie. Eisenberg and Stupnitsky have elevated lowest common denominator humor into potentially its highest form, deriving laughs and insight from the adorably immature misunderstandings about the world of boys of this age. “Good Boys” is a moment to reminisce and embrace your inner tween self, and give thanks for those awkward days gone by.

“Good Boys” is rated R for strong crude sexual content, drug and alcohol material, and language throughout — all involving tweens. Running time: 89 minutes.

‘Angry Birds 2’ is still cuckoo, but complex ideas unexpectedly take flight

By Katie Walsh
Tribune News Service



Sony/TNS

The irritable avians of the popular game app return in “The Angry Birds Movie 2,” with voices by Jason Sudeikis, Danny McBride, Bill Hader and Leslie Jones.

The “Angry Birds” movies are the textbook definition of chaotic energy. The second film in the franchise, “The Angry Birds Movie 2” (grammar nerds will chafe at this awkward phrasing), directed by Thurop Van Orman and written by Peter Ackerman, Eyal Podell and Jonathan E. Stewart, is somehow even more chaotic than the first. But what else could one possibly expect from the sequel to the animated feature adaptation of a smartphone game where the object is to launch small round birds at green pigs using slingshots?

These movies are wacky. They’re silly. The writers launch ’90s jokes right over the heads of the kiddie audience, aiming squarely for the noggins of their parents. They’ve got the entire Sony Music catalog, and you bet they’re gonna cram in 30 seconds of every familiar hit song to which they already have the rights. It’s a colorful, cuckoo-crazy, sometimes funny, often bewildering experience, to which you slowly become numb with every incongruous shot of Leonard the pig’s round, green butt. Come to think of it, it’s the kind of entertainment that could only be enhanced with a little green.

But it’s not all just pop music and toilet humor (though that’s a lot of it). The saga is a tale of the violent horrors of colonialism. In the first film, peaceful flightless birds battled the invasion of an ingratiating porcine population, led by Leonard (Bill Hader), who had the ulterior motive of stealing their eggs for food. After leading a guerrilla mission on Piggy Island to rescue the eggs from the porky pioneers, angry outcast Red (Jason Sudeikis) became a folk hero. Now, the birds and pigs must band together to survive as a mysterious third party has launched an all-out attack on both islands in a ruthless land-grab.

The offending invader is Zeta (Leslie Jones), an embittered eagle who has marshalled all her tremendous scientific might into launching ice bombs (and then lava-filled ice bombs) at Bird and Piggy Islands because her own island is “too cold” and she’d like a tropical vacation.

Red reluctantly agrees to team up with Leonard because he believes his only worth lies in his identity as a rebel hero. If they have speed-dating on Bird Island, you would think they might also have therapy. Nevertheless, Red and Leonard assemble a team, “Ocean’s Eleven”-style, to sneak into Zeta’s lair, “Mission: Impossible”-style, and end the bombing campaign. The enterprising yet immature group is made up of speedy Chuck (Josh Gad), explosive Bomb (Danny McBride) and a new team member, the bright engineering student Silver (Rachel Bloom). Mayhem, dance battles, bathroom showdowns and outlandish feats of physics ensue.

“The Angry Birds Movie 2” (it makes me angrier every time I type that instead of “The Second Angry Birds Movie”) is somehow looser, more disjointed and yet deeper than the first. The film flits from set piece to set piece, from lava bombs to bird dating to pop-and-locking eagles. Often, we stray from the main plot to a minor side-plot involving a trio of large-eyed, baby-talking hatchlings who lose three eggs and embark on an impossible quest to rescue them. And yet it also surprisingly deals with real emotional quandaries, like abandonment issues, rage, scorn and self-worth. If there’s any lesson here, it’s to always expect the unexpected when it comes to “Angry Birds.”

“The Angry Birds Movie 2” is rated PG for rude humor and action. Running time: 96 minutes.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

PREVIEW



Call of Duty: Modern Warfare

First hands-on with multiplayer

BY OZZIE MEJIA
Shacknews.com

Prior to E3 2019, Activision and Infinity Ward revealed their plan to move into the future by touching on the past. Call of Duty: Modern Warfare returns to the era of fighting in the modern era, touching on present-day conflicts and scenarios. But while the goals for single-player have been established, it's now time to move on to what the game's multiplayer has to offer.

Whether you want to tag team with a partner in the 2v2 gun game, queue into traditional rounds of team Deathmatch and Domination, or get into much larger games with larger maps, Modern Warfare's multiplayer is looking to offer something for a variety of audiences.



Here are the game modes that appear to be confirmed for "Modern Warfare" so far.

■ **Team Deathmatch:** Team Deathmatch is as traditional as Call of Duty itself, but there will be a couple of twists available. While TDM can be played with traditional settings, it can also be played 10v10 or 20v20, with different map selections available for larger sessions.

■ **Domination:** Domination is another Call of Duty staple. Attempt to capture three points and control them for as long as possible. The first team to score 200 points wins.

■ **Gunfight:** An old favorite, Gun Game has been refined into Gunfight, now designed for a 2v2 setting.

■ **Headquarters:** Another old favorite, Headquarters will randomly spawn a capture point somewhere along the map. When the Headquarters is captured, the capturing team must defend the spot for as long as possible. The team defending the Headquarters cannot respawn if killed until the next Headquarters point spawns in.



ACTIVISION/TNS photos

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare is an upcoming first-person shooter that will serve as the 16th overall installment in the Call of Duty series.

■ **Cyber Attack:** This is one of the newest multiplayer modes for Modern Warfare. This sees two teams looking to grab a bomb in the center of the map and escort it to the opposing team's data network in order to disable it. Downed players will not respawn, but they can be revived by teammates.

There is something to note about multiplayer this time around, and that's the size of the maps. Map designs run the gamut for smaller sessions, like Gunfight. But they'll also vary between the expected map size for the average game of Domination or TDM and much larger maps for bigger sessions. Aniyah Palace, for example, is big enough to hold an entire Middle Eastern chateau in the center of the map, while also offering enough of an outdoor area to allow for two-person ATVs.

Most of the game's maps will take place during the day, but one particular instance of Team Deathmatch saw us revisit the Azhir Cave map, but at night. This meant playing the entirety of the game with night vision goggles, which proved to be more than an aesthetic change. Because of the nature of Red Dot Sight, night vision means you can see the full laser on any firearm. That means it's easier to see what's coming and anticipate the arrival of enemies. On the other side, it means that players can't use RDS to aid their aim and will have to compensate for that loss.

Guarding points in game modes like Headquarters and Domination also requires a little more strategy this time around, thanks to a seemingly minor addition: doors. Yes, doors — and how you interact with them can play a big factor in the average multiplayer session. It's possible to push a door open slightly, so as not to give your position away, offering just enough space to slip in a smoke grenade. You can barrel straight through the door at full speed in an effort to take the enemy by surprise. You can even breach the door with a C4 explosive and hope you'll catch someone unaware on the other side. The same principle works defensively. You can close doors behind you and patiently wait for some careless goofball to barge in and get riddled with bullets. You can also set a trap by shutting a door and then placing a claymore right behind it.

Sound design for Modern Warfare is critical across the board, and multiplayer will be no exception. Infinity Ward has gone out of its way to test audio for its various weapons, incorporating the sounds of bullet trails from distance, from indoors, from inside hollow caves and other scenarios in order to create as accurate an experience as possible. For the average player, that means it should be easier to judge the distance of an enemy player.

This is not all that Modern Warfare multiplayer has to offer. Infinity Ward is also looking to feature what they're touting as a fresh spin on Search and Destroy. They're also going even larger scale with Ground War, a mode that promises to hold more than 100 players.

Character builds promise to have more variety than the average Call of Duty game. Beyond the full Create-A-Class feature, Perks and Killstreaks playing a big role in how players constitute their character, Infinity Ward is also adding a full-blown Gunsmith feature to most of the game's firearms. This means customizing a slew of firearm components, including stock, grip, muzzle and even special perks exclusive to guns. Many of these options will have tradeoffs, increasing the value of one stat while lowering another.

Modern Warfare will look to be the most connected of the Call of Duty games to date, allowing for progression to carry over across single-player, co-op and multiplayer, with cross-play supported across PC and consoles.

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare will release on PC (via Battle.net), PlayStation 4, and Xbox One on October 25.

More game reviews at stripes.com/games



Photos by Jacqueline Broome

Striking sculptures like this blade-wielding medieval man are scattered throughout the winding streets of Bouillon.

Belgian charm

Cruise Semois River by paddleboat, explore medieval castle in Bouillon

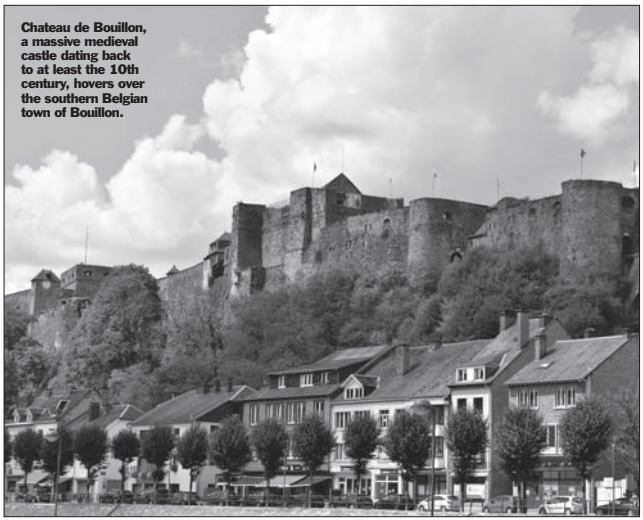
By Gregory Broome
Stars and Stripes

One of the first things you're likely to notice about Bouillon is the boats. They bob bucolically on the edge of the Semois River, the lazy waterway that embraces the small village in southern Belgium, and offer a decisive answer to an obvious question: Now that we've arrived, what do we do?

The boats, a flock of which can be found on the dock just below the tourist information center, are a great place to start. Three euros rents a person a half-hour on one such whimsical watercraft, colorfully adorned with swans or other aquatic-themed animals. That's plenty of time for a leisurely float down the river and back, observing the scenic town from a water bird's-eye view and perhaps tossing bread to the opportunistic ducks that tend to congregate around the ubiquitous boats.

Back on land, Bouillon offers all the infrastructure of the kind of classically charming European small town that tends to attract travelers. There's an easily located information center, a smattering of shops and eateries lining the riverway, and ample free parking to funnel visitors to those businesses. The town also has a signature attraction to serve as the centerpiece of its touristic aspirations — Chateau de Bouillon, a massive castle situated on a hill overlooking the town.

The castle dates back to at least the 10th century and has a fascinating history, which can be explored in detail on a tour through the sprawling estate. Visitors who choose not to part with the 11-euro entrance fee can still get a taste of the medieval by embarking on the short and not particularly strenuous trek up through the town to the castle, enjoying the panoramic views from its walls and venturing across the first of three drawbridges connecting its various sections.



Chateau de Bouillon, a massive medieval castle dating back to at least the 10th century, hovers over the southern Belgian town of Bouillon.



A close-up view of Chateau de Bouillon illustrates the sheer size of the medieval structure.



Paddleboats line the banks of the Semois River, offering visitors a chance to observe the scenic city from a swan's-eye view.

As attractive as it is to look at, the town of Bouillon is rather light on activities beyond the castle and the paddleboats. The town center holds a handful of museums and galleries and an attractive if not very distinctive cathedral.

The green space around the town offers an animal park and an uphill hike to an observation tower for another vantage point of Bouillon and the countryside.

Depending on how deeply you choose to immerse yourself in the castle's expansive footprint and history, a visit to Bouillon can occupy anywhere from a couple of hours to a full day's itinerary.

Either way, the town is worth a visit.

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ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Bouillon is located about two hours south of Brussels on Belgium's border with France and easily accessible via major highways through France and Luxembourg. Navigate to Boulevard Heynen for ample parking spaces a short walk from the main attractions.

TIMES

Many shops in Bouillon close for a couple of hours in the afternoon and/or early at night, so consider checking in advance.

COSTS

The castle costs 11 euros ($12.31) for adults to enter, while the animal park charges 13 euros. Other attractions charge a nominal entry fee.

FOOD

There are plenty of reasonably-priced eateries all over the small town, many focused on local specialties like fries, mussels, chocolate and beer, along with a few more extravagant options.

INFORMATION

The website bouillon-tourisme.be/en offers English-language guidance for a visit to the town. English is only sporadically spoken.

— Gregory Broome

Doors to the past: Europe's time-warp homes

Many of Europe's time-warp houses — sights that bring you back to a bygone era — get only a few thoughtful travelers, overshadowed by big-name museums. But they're the sights that might just make your day.

For example, Glasgow's Tenement House offers a chance to drop into a perfectly preserved, 1930s-era, middle-class residence. The National Trust for Scotland bought this otherwise ordinary row home, located in a residential neighborhood, because of the peculiar tendencies of its former owner, Agnes Toward (1886–1975). For five decades, she kept her home essentially unchanged. (She also was a late adopter, making the leap to electricity only in 1960.) The kitchen calendar is still set for 1935, canisters of licorice powder (a laxative) still sit on the bathroom shelf, and her piano, once the room's entertainment center, hasn't budged. As visitors explore the four little rooms, volunteers explain the utility of the iron stove, the importance of that drawer full of coal, and why the bed is in the kitchen.

Though much more well-known, the Jacquemart-Andre Museum in Paris is another place I enjoy visiting. This was the lavish home of a wealthy, art-loving, 19th-century Parisian couple, Edouard Andre and his wife Nelie Jacquemart. They had no children, and spent their lives and fortunes designing, building and then decorating this mansion with chandeliers, gilded trim and exotic curios. The couple had a mutual passion for art: The place is strewn with paintings. Stepping into the Versailles-like Grand Salon, it's easy to imagine the sumptuous parties held here, with up to 1,000 guests.

In London, quirky Sir John Soane's Museum is a gem. A professor of architecture at the Royal Academy, Soane created his home to be a place of learning, cramming it floor to ceiling with ancient relics, curios and famous paintings, including Hogarth's series on The Rake's Progress. Soane even purchased the Egyptian sarcophagus of King Seti I (Ramesses II's father) after the British Museum turned it down — at the time, they couldn't afford the £2,000 sticker price. In 1833, just before his death, Soane established his house as a museum, stipulating that it be kept as nearly as possible in the state he left it. I always leave wishing I'd known the man.



Rick Steves

Some time-warp houses do let you get to know their inhabitants — at least a little. In Sicily's capital city Palermo, Palazzo Conte Federico offers a rare opportunity to see museum-worthy ancestral relics in one of Palermo's oldest buildings — and meet a Sicilian aristocrat. The palace has been home to generation upon generation of Count Federico's family, which can be traced back to Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. But now that the perks of nobility no longer pay the bills, the family has opened the doors of their elegant and extremely lived-in mansion to the paying public. When you take a tour, the charming Countess Alwine, or one of her sons, enthusiastically shows opulent rooms with Baroque ceiling frescoes and ancient weapons, as well as photos and paintings of noble ancestors. The current count, Alessandro, may show off his vintage race car. You can see one of the few remaining parts of the city wall as you climb into the 12th-century Arab-Norman tower. You can even stay overnight in the palazzo: Sons Nicolo and Andreas manage apartment rentals on a separate floor.

Nestled in England's cozy rural Cotswolds district is one of my favorite noble manor houses: Stanway House, home of the Earl of Wemyss. The earl, the 13th in a line that stretches back to the 1200s, welcomes visitors two days a week in the summer. Walking through his manor house offers a surprisingly intimate glimpse into England's aristocratic lifestyle. You're free to wander around pretty much as you like — and the earl is often roaming about as well. On the grounds, the 14th-century tithe barn predates the manor. It was originally where monks — in the days before money — would accept one-tenth of whatever the peasants produced. While it's no longer used to greet motley peasants and collect their feudal "rents," the lord still gets income from his vast landholdings, and hosts community fetes in his barn.



DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCCELLI/Rickstevs.com

At Stanway House in England's Cotswolds district, you can visit the Earl of Wemyss.

While you can't live like these mostly lavish European locals, it's an opportunity to see an authentic side to the places you came to visit.

Rick Steves (www.ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

Flowertime in Brussels

Each year in August, flowers transform the look and feel of the heart of Brussels. On even-numbered years, the magnificent square known as the Grand Place is blanketed with an elaborate floral carpet, and on odd-numbered ones, the decor moves inside to the Town Hall, a masterpiece of Gothic architecture dating back to the Middle Ages.

The show named Flowertime comes about through the efforts of 30 floral artists, who use more than 100,000 flowers to decorate 13 of the Town Hall's stately rooms. The theme to this year's edition of the event, "A World of Floral Emotions," reflects the international nature of the creative talents behind the displays, who represent 13 countries. Visitors can take in the floral arrangements embellishing the entry hall, meeting and reception rooms by means of walking along a set route.

Flowertime can be visited from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily through Aug. 18. Tickets are available at the entrance for 8 euros. Children under 10 enter for free. Online: flowertime.brussels/en



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: **stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler**

Dutch folklore outside Amsterdam

The atmosphere of a quaint Dutch village of centuries past has been captured and preserved for posterity at Zaanse Schans, an open-air complex just to the north of Amsterdam. In this charming area of wooden houses and windmills, barns and workshops relocated to the banks of the Zaan River, the crafts and pursuits of yesterday have been resurrected for the education and enjoyment of visitors, who can visit an old cheese factory, see how wooden clogs are made or tour a working windmill.

A good chance to see the village at full steam is offered on Aug. 17, its annual Folklore Day. From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., staff and volunteers from the area's historical associations, clad in costumes of the time, will demonstrate the trades and leisure-time activities of long-past eras. No admission is charged to enter the village of Zaanse Schans itself, although its individual attractions may charge entry fees. A budget-friendly way to get there is to take bus 391 departing from Amsterdam's Central Station. Online: folkloredag.nl

Magic Lights in Ludwigsburg

The Bluehendes Barock gardens of Ludwigsburg Castle in Germany host numerous special events. Next up is Lichterzauber, or Magic Lights, on Aug. 17.

Things to do include watching model ships sailing in the lake, crafting one's own lantern or watching Beppo the Clown perform. (6 and 7 p.m.) At 8 p.m., a parade of lanterns gets underway. The evening's high point, a pyrotechnic show, starts at 9:30 p.m. Gates open at 2 p.m. Admission costs 9 euros for adults and 5 euros for children ages 4-15.

It won't be long before Bluehendes Barock hosts its annual pumpkin exhibition. From Aug. 31 through Nov. 3, visitors can enjoy the sight of close to half a million autumn-hued gourds placed in artful arrangements. The theme of this year's exhibition is "The Fabulous World of Fairy Tales." Events worth checking out during the exhibition's run might include a regatta in which hollowed-out pumpkins double as boats (Sept. 21-22), the cooking of Germany's biggest pumpkin soup (Sept. 28-29), weigh-ins of the competition for Germany and Europe's heaviest pumpkins (Oct. 6 and 13) or the pumpkin carving festival (Nov. 3).

Festival of Ceramics in Poland

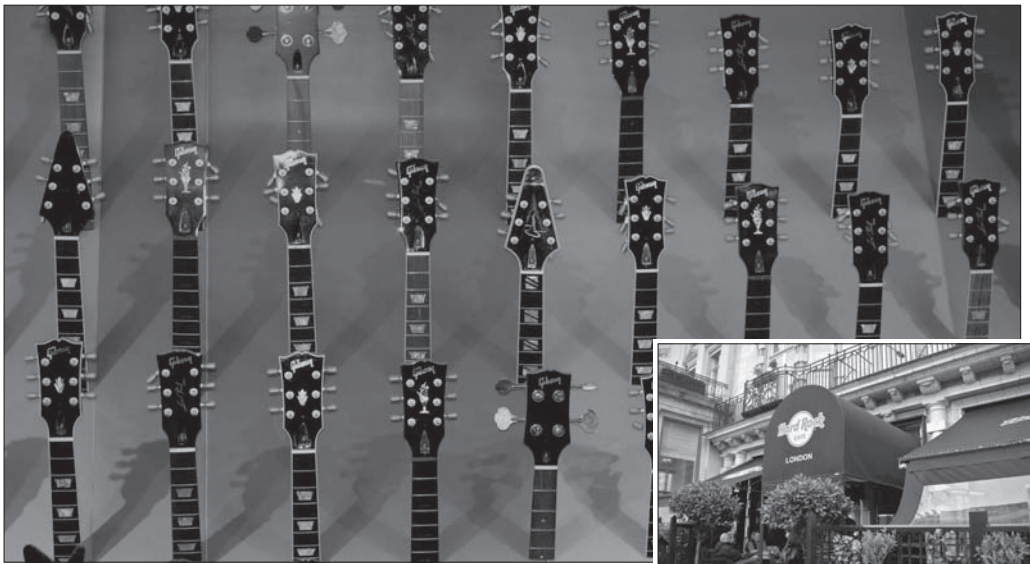
Fans of Polish pottery can pick it up in bulk at its source and make a travel memory while they're at it, as Boleslawieck hosts its annual Festival of Ceramics through Aug. 18.

Here in this city in southwest Poland, more than 100 exhibitors, including some from other areas, display and sell their earthenware creations at fair prices. Their offerings include both functional and decorative pieces. Workshops for parents and children, a Holi-inspired event involving the throwing of colored powders, concerts, an antiques market and an open-air sculpture exhibition round out the program. Online: swietoceramiki.pl

Mock wedding in Amsterdam

Dreaming of a white wedding set against the backdrop of a stunning European city? Make way to Amsterdam, where a company by the name of Wed & Walk offers a unique take on the traditional union.

To help couples temporarily tie the knot, a variety of packages are offered. For the sum of 150 euros, for example, a lucky pair gets use of wedding attire including bridal gowns, tailcoats, top hats and other accessories, floral arrangements, a decorated set, ceremony with personal speech, souvenir rings to keep as a memento, and a photo of the first kiss. Up to 14 guests can be invited to attend the mock celebration. More basic packages start at just 100 euros. Best of all? As the ceremony is not legally binding, the next day you're free as a bird. Online: wed-and-walk.com



Photos by Jackie Broome

Guitars and other musical memorabilia cover the walls and hallways of the original Hard Rock Cafe in the West End of London, which is nestled between Hyde Park and Buckingham Palace.

Party, eat hearty

Original Hard Rock location in London still satisfies

BY GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

There are Hard Rock Cafe locations scattered across the world now, nearly 50 years after its founding, and countless imitators seeking to profit from unlawful use of the name, like the Heidelberg, Germany, copycat forced to cease operations in 2017.

Similarly, knockoff T-shirts featuring the restaurant's logo above the name of a city without a legitimate Cafe have long circulated as bootleg souvenirs. A search on Amazon even revealed a listing for a Hard Rock Cafe in Winterfell, the fictional locale in the TV show Game of Thrones.

There's one foolproof way to cut through all the jokes and confusion: visit the original.

The first Hard Rock Cafe was opened in 1971 in the West End of London. That location, nestled between Hyde Park and Buckingham Palace, still operates a bustling business, both in its restaurant and in the Rock Shop memorabilia emporium just across the street.

My family and I finally visited the original Hard Rock Cafe on our most recent trip to London and found it to be an intensely touristy but nonetheless worthwhile experience.

We made online reservations, prominently suggested on the chain's website at hardrock.com, and were thereby able to cut through the pack of hopeful walk-in diners agitating around the front door. But the reservation didn't rescue us from the crowds entirely; we were led to our table through a mass of seated humanity and employees weaving through it, then squeezed into a cozy four-top with limited room for elbows and knees.

Once seated, our friendly server performed some crowd-pleasing sleight of hand with a stack of napkins before subtly upselling us on drinks and burger toppings. As we waited for our food, we took the opportunity to wander around as unobtrusively as possible and take a look at the musical artifacts displayed around the large dining room, another Hard Rock hallmark that has spawned legions of subsequent ripoffs across the world.

AFTER HOURS
ENGLAND

Our focus turned to the food as our table filled with generous portions of cheeseburgers, nachos, chicken fingers and other American-style bar food. Each was well-executed and delicious, a laudable achievement for a restaurant working on such an enormous daily scale.

That left only the bill, a prospect that intimidated me enough to request a full menu with prices from the restaurant via email days before our flight to London. It turned out to be rather reasonable, especially for a tourist-focused novelty restaurant located in one of the more expensive areas of an expensive city.

Fully satisfied with our meals, my group headed next door to the Rock Shop to stock up on some authentic Hard Rock gear. A brief but free visit to the gift shop's basement offered one last chance to get up close with some fascinating vestiges of rock-and-roll history. We left the Hard Rock compound with renewed appreciation for the Cafe and the music it celebrates, and glad that we'd made sure to see the authentic original.

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Food at the original Hard Rock Cafe in London is expensive but a reasonably good value, especially considering the site's entertainment aspect, its wait list and its location in an upscale area of London.

HARD ROCK CAFE LONDON

Location: 150 Old Park Lane in London, very close to the Hyde Park tube station.
Hours: The Cafe opens at 11 a.m. daily and stays open until 12:30 a.m. on weekdays, 1 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 10:30 p.m. Sundays.
Prices: Burgers, for which Hard Rock is probably most well-known, cost around 16.50 British pounds ($20) apiece. Most other entrees land in a similar price range. Appetizers like chicken wings and nachos check in a little cheaper, at around 10 or 11 pounds.
Information: Make reservations and check out a menu at hardrock.com. Click Locations to view the original location, referred to as Hard Rock Cafe London as opposed to secondary locations on Oxford Street and at Piccadilly Circus.

— Gregory Broome

Walking along Britain's deadliest path

By William Booth
The Washington Post

The ramblers call it the deadliest walk in Britain, the "most perilous path," and so for some it is as irresistible as a siren's song.

A yellow sign with a stark exclamation point at the trailhead announces that this ancient "right of way" — first recorded in the 15th century — is "hazardous to pedestrians."

We are skeptical. We are city people. But we looked up the records and read that 100 people have died here over the centuries.

Truth be told, the many warnings stir the bowels, especially the caution of "unexploded objects." The path crosses a still-active military test-firing zone, pelted with bombs since long-gone boys slaughtered each other in the trenches in World War I.

On marine charts, the fabled, infamous Broomway trail is shown traversing a nebulous gray shoal, half land, half sea, not entirely here nor there. One can only venture onto the path at low tide. At high water, the Broomway disappears — abracadabra, thanks to the moon — to become the North Sea again.

The footpath is marked on the maps by a confident straight line just north of the mouth of the mighty River Thames and its estuary, running for six miles through a vast delta called the Maplin Sands.

The word "sand" doesn't sound so bad? But skimming the travel essays and local histories, one discovers some of these sands are the quicksand ones, far from shore.

Then there is the equally disturbing caution of the "Black Grounds," closer to land, described as a kind of jellied pudding of mud that swallows people and animals.

So, please, let's avoid those spots.

One of the charts advised, "Seek Local Guidance," and that is what we did.

We met Brian Dawson on a recent Sunday evening at the entrance. Dawson is 76 years old, with one new knee, awaiting a second. He herded us half-dozen ramblers in rubber boots into a tight flock and, clucking about the tides, said, "Can't wait. Let's go. We'll turn back if the wind picks up."

So we began: out onto the wooden wattling of the Wakering Stairs, down a descending causeway built of sticks and stones that transitions the walker from the low marshlands of Foulness Island onto the Maplin Sands.

Dawson was pleased with the first 100 yards. "The walking's good, the sand is hard, but please keep up with me," he said. "Don't go wandering …"

We clung to him like barnacles.

The path is called the Broomway, Dawson explained, because walking the Sand Bar at low tide was once the only way to get to Foulness Island without a boat, and farmers erected a line of rushes and reeds as signposts to help them get back and forth from market.

There are few brooms now.

"The path goes out to sea — and then? It just disappears," said Jim Mackenzie, 66, a retired computer engineer and one of our group, grinning with the oddness of it.

There is a metaphor there, he said.

Even at dead low tide, the sand was covered by six inches of briny, swirly water. We navigated over long braids of eel grass, scuttling crabs, the odd blue mussels and small bait fish, trapped.

The sea floor was solid enough — but still a little needy. The muck tugged at our boots, then reluctantly let go, and our progress sounded like suction cups applied and released, over and over: pluck, pluck, pluck!

It was tiring and spooky and sublime.

Once away from land, gazing out, it was hard to tell where open water began and sand ended.

We could understand how a person without GPS or a compass could become disoriented if a fog rolled in. We were guppies in a milky white fishbowl.

"I like something peculiar — and this is it," said Jan Knight, 46, a retired military man turned teacher who came out for the hike.



Photos by Tori Ferenc/For The Washington Post

Brian Dawson leads hikers on the Broomway — commonly called the "most perilous path" in Britain.

In the far distance, toward the sea, we could see the wind turbines off the Essex coast, spinning like children's pinwheels along the horizon. There were also tankers, freighters and cruise ships plying the Oaze Deep and The Warp channels. The ships would appear and then recede into the haze.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31



Hikers led by Brian Dawson turn around at Asplins Head along the Broomway path in England.

FROM PAGE 30

Toward land, on Foulness Island — today owned and guarded by Britain's Defense Ministry — one could glimpse faint objects, towers and scaffolds. They looked like Cold War ruins. "All very hush-hush," said our guide Dawson. He pointed to one: "That's an ejection-seat tester" — to test catapulting a pilot out of a failing military aircraft.

We sloshed on and arrived at a marker for Havengore Creek. It stood there like a battered cross at Calvary, salt-pocked and tilting. There was no creek at low tide, but there would be again soon.

Dawson told us that as the tide returns and the North Sea races to cover the Broomway, the metabolism of the pathway quickly changes from benign to malevolent.

"The tide comes in faster than a man can run," Dawson warned. "It comes in from all directions."

In minutes, sea up to your calves, then thighs, then hips. "Can you swim two miles against a current?" Dawson asked.

An account at a parliamentary hearing noted the deaths of three young men who ventured onto the sands to shoot waterfowl but were lost in the mist in January 1969.

"Exactly how they died will probably never be known," the record concludes. "Richard Pinch's body was discovered on the outer edge of the sands in March. Andrew Bull's body was found closer in to land in June, and Robin Perry's body has never been found."

On the day of our trek, though, with an eye on the tide charts, mobile phones tracking our positions, and Dawson guiding us along, it all felt fine.

Why would people want to do the Broomway?

There is no need anymore. There is a bridge to Foulness Island, built in 1922, maintained by the military.

A local farmer and historian, Peter Carr, told us the islanders are tough and resilient, but their culture is fading away — the school, church, pub and post office are all shuttered. Homes are abandoned. About 150 people, mostly farmers and pensioners, remain.

"When people call, we tell them, 'There's nothing here!' And I think that's why they want to come," Dawson said.

The esteemed British nature writer Robert Macfarlane hiked the Broomway for his 2013 book, "The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot." He recalled "the walk out to the sea as a soft lunacy, a passage to beyond this world."

Macfarlane confessed it might not be the most perilous journey, but it was "the unearthliest path I have ever walked."

Paul Carter, a veteran hiker, wrote on a British walking website that the Broomway was "like nothing else I have experienced in this country."

It is barely 40 miles from London.

At the halfway point of our three-hour hike, Asplins Head, we stopped and drank tea from our thermoses and nibbled biscuits before turning back. We were in the middle of nowhere, our feet in the salt.

Britain is a nation of walkers, and this was a fine place to admire the view.

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PHOTOS BY MATTHEW M. BURKE/Stars and Stripes

The Maeda Escarpment today, looking in the direction from which the U.S. Army attacked, as seen on April 4, 2019.

History, heroism and Hacksaw

Site of bloody WWII battle now a peaceful site to recall acts of valor

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

The thing that stands out about Okinawa's idyllic Maeda Escarpment today is its peacefulness.

Rolling green fields, trees, unique rock formations and stunning vistas greet dog walkers, lovers, foreign tourists and local schoolchildren alike.

As if these stunning natural features were not enough, the escarpment is a wonder for a totally unrelated reason. It is known by another name that commands reverence: Hacksaw Ridge.

Hacksaw Ridge — as the name implies — was the site of some of the bloodiest fighting during the Battle of Okinawa 74 years ago. It was immortalized in the 2016 film of the same name directed by Mel Gibson. The film depicts the heroics of then 26-year-old Army Pfc. Desmond Doss, a Seventh Day Adventist from Lynchburg, Va., who received the Medal of Honor for his actions under fire there.

Like many former World War II battle sites, time and nature have swallowed the carnage and muted the cries of the wounded and dying. Yet just below the surface, the ghosts remain.

American forces began landing at Chatan and Yomitan on April 1, 1945, according to battle histories on the Urasoe and Naha city websites. They began moving south toward the Japanese military headquarters at Shuri Castle.

They had to fight their way through Kakazu Ridge and Hacksaw Ridge as the island's Japanese defenders had taken the high ground to try and repel the invading Americans.

Hacksaw Ridge is a hilled area above the ruins of Urasoe Castle. Totally destroyed during the fighting, the distinct castle walls and tombs of Ryukyu kings Eiso and Shonei have since been rebuilt.

The ridge was a logistical nightmare for both sides. It was inaccessible to American tanks and had to be climbed and taken by soldiers from the 307th Infantry Regiment, 77th Infantry Division.

For the Japanese, the ridge's steep cliffs and narrow approaches didn't allow for machine gun nests to fire down upon the Americans as they approached, the Urasoe city website said. The Japanese had to repel them once they summited the plateau, which the Japanese transformed into a kill zone.

Doss arrived as a medic attached to Company B, 1st Battalion, according to the book "Okinawa: The Last Battle," by Roy Appleman, James Burns, Russell Gugeler and John Stevens. As a pacifist, Doss had been threatened and harassed by his comrades for refusing to carry a weapon in combat or kill an enemy soldier.

By the time Doss got to Okinawa, he had already served with distinction on Guam and in the Philippines, according to his Washington Post obituary from 2006.

Doss' Company B approached Hacksaw Ridge in late April 1945, the book said.



The Maeda Escarpment Peace Monument — erected to honor the war dead from Japan's 2nd Battalion, 32nd Regiment — is believed to be near the point where Desmond Doss lowered 75 wounded soldiers to safety.

They aimed for Needle Rock, a nearly 43-foot rock at the east end of the hill.

Company A mounted four 50-foot ladders, which were lashed together, and cargo nets on the ridge's eastern end on May 1, the book said. However, every man who climbed to the top was killed. Company B attempted the climb with cargo nets farther to the west.

They were ultimately successful in getting two platoons on top of the 400-foot plateau, the book said.

Thousands of Japanese soldiers awaited them in caves and fighting holes, according to a U.S. Army history of Doss.

As Doss and his fellow soldiers made it to the summit, they were pummeled with artillery, mortar and machine gun fire, according to Doss' Medal of Honor citation. Seventy-five casualties fell and the rest of the men were forced to withdraw.

Only Doss remained.

He "refused to seek cover and remained in the fire-swept area with the many stricken, carrying them one by one to the edge of the escarpment and there lowering them on a rope-supported litter down the face of a cliff to friendly hands," the citation reads.

Many of the same men Doss had saved, were the very same ones who had treated him so poorly earlier in his military career, the Army history said.

On May 2, Doss exposed himself to rifle and mortar fire to rescue a casualty some 200 yards forward of the American line, the citation reads. On May 4, he advanced through a "shower" of grenades to rescue four wounded men who had been cut down while assaulting a cave. Doss treated their wounds within eight yards of the cave's mouth and made four separate trips to evacuate them.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Address: 2-chome-53 Nakama, Urasoe-shi, Okinawa 901-2103
GPS to Desmond Doss Point: N 26.246270, E 127.732982

TIMES

The park is open 24/7, however; Japanese parking lots typically close at night. Urasoe Youdore Museum is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. but closed on Mondays — except holidays — and Dec. 28 to Jan. 3. Guides from the Urasoe Historical Guide group are available at the museum.

COSTS

Entry to Urasoe Castle is free. Museum entry is 100 yen for high school students and older and 50 yen for middle school students and younger.

FOOD

No food or drinks are served in the park. Urasoe Castle offers green space where one could have a picnic while the kids play. There are cafes and eateries — including Okinawan soba — in the area.

INFORMATION

For tours of Hacksaw Ridge and other battle sites, contact MCCS Tours at 315-646-3502 (DSN)/098-971-3502 or tours@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org; mccsokinawa.com/tours Or contact the Urasoe Youdore Museum directly: 098-874-9345; urasoerekisi@nirai.ne.jp

— Matthew M. Burke



WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Pacific

FROM PAGE 32

A day later, he exposed himself to shelling and small arms fire while he administered plasma to yet another casualty, his citation reads. Later that day, Doss crawled to another severely wounded man who lay 25 feet from an enemy position. He treated the man and carried him 100 yards to safety.



Doss

The battle for Hacksaw Ridge ended May 6, the Urasoe city website said. However, that was not the end of Doss' heroics.

On the night of May 21, he was seriously wounded in his legs by a grenade while treating casualties, alone in an exposed position near Shuri, the citation reads. He treated himself and waited five hours for help. As he was being evacuated, they were caught in an enemy tank attack.

"Private First Class Doss, seeing a more critically wounded man nearby, crawled off the litter; and directed the bearers to give their first attention to the other man," the citation said. "Awaiting the litter bearers' return, he was again struck, this time suffering a compound fracture of one arm."

Doss famously bound a rifle stock to his shattered arm and crawled 300 yards to an aid station, the citation said. He became the first conscientious objector to receive the Medal of Honor on Oct. 12, 1945, from President Harry Truman, the Army biography said.

Nearly 500 of the 800 men in Doss' battalion became casualties atop Hacksaw Ridge, an Army history of the battle said. Upwards of 3,000 Japanese were estimated killed.

The Maeda Escarpment Peace Monument — erected to honor the war dead from Japan's 2nd Battalion, 32nd Regiment — lies today next to a gravel parking lot carved out of the cliffside after the war. The monument and the gravel lot nearby marks the approximate spot of Doss' litter-lowering heroics, local tour guides told Stars and Stripes.

The scars from the battle atop Hacksaw Ridge are all but gone. Markers in a lovely meadow are all that remain.

Urasoe Castle and the Urasoe Youdore Museum offer a glimpse into Okinawa's past. Sadly, this past includes war. The island's anti-war identity makes Doss the perfect hero.

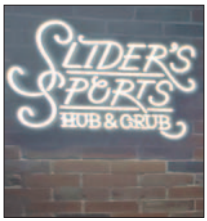
Shoji Kudaka of Stripes Okinawa contributed to this report.

burke.matt@stripes.com
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PHOTOS BY THERON GODBOLD/Stars and Stripes

Slider's Sports Hub & Grub in western Tokyo might remind American patrons of Buffalo Wild Wings.





Slider's, which opened July 4, specializes in sliders and wings, though the wings come in only two flavors.

Slider's offers a little taste of home

Familiar games, suds and snacks await at sports bar in Tokyo suburb

BY THERON GODBOLD
Stars and Stripes

Just a short walk from Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, there's a new sports bar with a flavorful menu and an American feel.

Slider's Sports Hub & Grub opened July 4 in the northeast end of the popular nightlife district called Bar Row. It's situated in a Tokyo suburb of Fussa, but inside its doors is the familiar atmosphere of a stateside sports bar.

While eating there recently with my friend Phil, we both observed that the new bar and restaurant reminded us of a Buffalo Wild Wings franchise, just a lot smaller.

The menu is small with only two main dishes, sliders and wings, which both start at about $6.50. But it also lists eight appetizers, including staples like nachos and cheese fries (both about $5.50), and desserts like strawberry cheesecake (about $5.50) and S'mores (about $5).

Sliders are mini-burgers about one-quarter the size of a normal burger and are served on a bed of french fries. If you're hungry, I recommend ordering the grand slider set (about $11.50) because the single is more of a snack than a meal.

Slider's shines with its other main menu item — wings. The one drawback is that the sports pub serves only two flavors, Buffalo and lemon pepper. But both put smiles on our faces.

"The Buffalo has just the right heat and none of the sweats, just flavor," Phil said.

Jason Roos — our server, cashier and waiter — said the pub plans on introducing a wider variety of wing flavors to its menu if the business does well.

AFTER HOURS JAPAN

The relatively small establishment has room for nine tables. Eight of them will seat nine patrons comfortably; the ninth will accommodate a party of 12 or so. Four big-screen TVs and a global satellite feed provide a range of live sports, from air racing to hockey and then some.

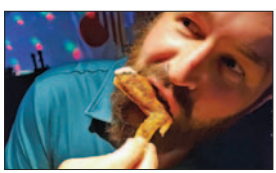
Also available are Big Game Hunter and Golden Tee, both video games, and darts, the tavern standby.

The staff wears sports jerseys, which adds to the fun and friendly atmosphere.

Slider's also offers American and Japanese beer in bottles and on tap. During our visit, the bar had two American craft labels on tap, Fat Tire and Stone IPA, although the beer varieties change frequently, our server said.

Our check came to about 3,900 yen (about $35) for two six-piece orders of wings, a single slider set and a basket of fries. Add another $8 for a pint of American craft beer or $5 for a bottle.

godbold.theron@stripes.com
Twitter: @TheronGodbold



A customer chomps into a lemon pepper chicken wing at Sliders Sports Hub & Grub, a new eatery near Yokota Air Base.

SLIDER'S SPORTS HUB & GRUB

Location: 906-6 Fussa, Tokyo 197-0011
Hours: 6 p.m. to 2 a.m., Wednesday through Sunday
Prices: Menu items range from 500 yen (about $4.60) for a basket of French fries to 1,700 yen (about $15.65) for 12-piece chicken wings with French fries.
Dress: Casual
Directions: Located near Bar Row, about a 10-minute walk from the main gate at Yokota Air Base, Japan
Information: Phone: 42-513-4022; Online: facebook.com/slidersfussa; sliders_fussa on Instagram.

— Theron Godbold



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Know before you board

Cruising is mostly safe, but beware of what can go wrong

By Hannah Sampson
The Washington Post

The cruise industry has given itself one black eye after another over the past few months — from a ship that floated adrift in a storm off Norway, to one that ran up on a dock in Venice, to the mechanical failure that left thousands of vacationers stranded in Barcelona.

Add in recurring incidents like overboard cases and stomach illness, and it's enough to make some people swear off cruising forever.

With cruises more connected to the internet than ever before, news of a disaster (or even a relatively minor glitch) can go viral fast. But more information doesn't mean the floating metropolises are becoming less safe.

A study by economic consultant G.P. Wild — commissioned by the cruise industry's trade group and released in March — makes the case that cruises are getting safer over time. Even as capacity increased 55 percent between 2009 and 2018, the report said, the number of overall "operational incidents" declined 37 percent and the rate of man-overboard cases dropped 35 percent.

Some of those incidents were industry-changing, including the shipwreck of the Costa Concordia that killed more than 30 people in 2012 and the fire that disabled the Carnival Triumph the following year. But cruise companies have adopted significant operational changes since those crises to keep the disasters from repeating.

Last year, an estimated 29.5 million people took a cruise. The G.P. Wild survey found that there were 14 significant operational incidents, 15 minor operational incidents and 23 overboard incidents, 19 of which were fatal. A "significant operational incident" is one that causes a delay of more than 24 hours, fatalities or serious injuries, while a "minor" incident is one that causes a delay of 24 hours or less or minor injuries.

And unlike a several years ago, when internet connections were spotty, slow and expensive, Wi-Fi on cruises has become widely available and fast. That means passengers with complaints or videos of wildly rocking ships can get the word out in real time.

"With social media and everyone having cellphones and ... Wi-Fi access, the cruise lines don't have control over the information," says Andrew Coggins, a cruise expert and professor of management at Pace University. "Where before, if the ship was at sea and something happened, the cruise line controlled — at least until the ship got in port — controlled what information went out about it."

Ross Klein, a professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland, in Canada, who tracks cruise mishaps and overboard cases at CruiseJunkie.com, said the industry's history is peppered with mistakes and accidents — which is not to say that cruising is inherently unsafe.

"What it says is that stuff happens," he says. "And don't go on a cruise assuming everything is perfect and safe. You have no control over it; (there's) nothing you can do about it. Take safety precautions."

Passengers know, for example, to pay attention during the safety drill at the beginning of a cruise that shows where they need to go in case of an emergency. But, Klein said, they should go further.

"They don't think about, what happens if I can't get to my muster station?" he said, referring to the gathering place for emergencies. "'I want to find my partner; where do we find each other if there's bedlam? Where do we find our kids?' ... What you can control is how you're going to respond and if you can minimize the most tragic sorts of outcome."

While the millions of people who cruise every year are unlikely to encounter significant problems, some of the issues that capture the public's attention are stomach illness, man-overboard cases, violent storms, delays and itinerary changes. Statistics compiled by the U.S. Department of Transportation show that sexual assault is the most frequent type of crime alleged on ships that sail from the United States, although those cases make the news less frequently.

There is no single database of every ill to befall a cruise ship, crew members or passengers, but there are a handful of sources — some official, some of a more watchdog nature — where travelers can find information about safety and the frequency of unnerving situations.

According to the G.P. Wild study, the "significant" operational incidents last year, of which there were 14, included one fire or explosion; six technical issues; three strandings or groundings; one striking of a stationary object; and three other issues including a delay for lifeboat repairs, a passenger killed while boarding from a smaller ship and an engineer killed after slipping on a ladder.

Two people died and two were injured.

The 15 minor incidents included one fire; six technical issues; one grounding; two storm-related complications; four collisions or allisions (or hitting a stationary, vs. moving, object); and a lifeboat fall failure. Those resulted in one injury.

Last year, according to the study, there were 23 situations where one or more people went overboard; 19 died and five were rescued. That number was actually higher than in the previous two years: Fourteen went overboard in 2017, and 12 the year before, the study showed. In 2017, 11 people died and three were rescued, while only one person was rescued in 2016.

Klein, who tracks overboard cases based on reports in news media, cruise websites and other sources, showed higher numbers over the past three years: 26 in 2018, 17 in 2017 and 16 in 2016. So far this year, as of July, he has listed 12 cases.

Not included on that was the death last month of an 18-month-old from Indiana, Chloe Wiegand, who fell from the 11th floor deck of the Freedom of the Seas while it was docked in Puerto Rico. According to a lawyer representing the family, the toddler's grandfather lifted her up onto a wooden railing in a child's play area, not realizing there was no glass on the other side. The incident is under investigation in Puerto Rico, but attorney Michael Winkleman said he was considering a negligence lawsuit against Royal Caribbean, which owns the ship.

Statistics kept by the Department of Transportation show allegations of criminal activity on ships that embark and disembark in the United States. Sexual assault is by far the top alleged offense, the numbers show. There were 82 allegations in 2018, and 18 during the first quarter of this year.

So far this year, at least 817 people on five ships — a small percent of all those onboard — have come down with gastrointestinal illnesses on ships that visit the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Last year saw at least 658 people get sick on 11 ships that called on the United States.

Typically, that illness is caused by norovirus, and cruise lines take measures to keep illness in check, with hand sanitizers placed all over ships and a health form that asks about symptoms before people board.

"It's important to take that seriously," Colleen McDaniel, editor in chief of the website Cruise Critic, said in an email. "Not every health issue will keep you from boarding, but it's important that you're honest with your answers to protect yourself and your fellow guests from any sort of illness."



Illustration by Noga Ami-rav/Stars and Stripes

Just a front?

Adorable photos of dogs are ubiquitous on dating sites – but sometimes the pooch is only a prop

By Terry Nguyen
The Washington Post

On Tinder, Avery Chuang developed a bad habit: She almost always swiped right on guys with a ridiculously adorable dog photo. It's not a high standard to go by, the 25-year-old in Elk Grove, Calif., admitted, but it helped her find men who are dog owners like herself — presuming that, of course, the featured pup is theirs.

She encountered her fair share of dog-baiters on dating apps (which she no longer uses since they are "addictive and demoralizing"). Most men were upfront in conversation with Chuang, but a few did slip through the cracks until she pieced it together.

There was a guy Chuang found attractive and charming and normal — until he turned around and questioned her for probing about his dog. And there was another who profusely apologized for displaying a friendly corgi that wasn't his (after she called him out) and then ghosted her.

Dogs, notably adorable photos of dogs, are a ubiquitous aspect of dating. They're convenient icebreakers on apps and on first dates. They add a nugget of personality to a profile. On Apple's App Store, Bumble features a photo of a bespectacled man cuddling a goldendoodle to insinuate how likable that is. There's also Dig, a new dating app specifically for dog owners.



iStock

'I know of acquaintances who buy or adopt a dog as a means to attract women. After the dog gets older, they put it up for adoption or leave it with their parents.'

Johnny Nguyen
dog owner, who has 'lent' his golden retriever to friends for use on their online dating profiles

This cultural obsession with dogs on the apps has spiraled into another problem: Daters are posting photos of pups they don't own, to attract matches. "Dogfishing" is not exactly a lie — the person did take a photo with that dog — but to some daters, it feels like a veiled form of deception. And things can get awkward fast when a date realizes that the pet in the profile solely exists as bait.

"That's the main thing: Stop borrowing dogs," said Erika Ettin, an online dating coach in Washington. She advises her clients' profiles to be representative of their real life. "It's just odd when you're using someone else's dog online, and it seems like you're trying too hard."

She thinks people are faking dog ownership because it suggests that a person has nurturing qualities, especially men: A 2014 survey of Match.com users showed that on the site, more women sought out men who have dogs than the other way around. "Sometimes women subconsciously equate things like how a man treats his dog is how he would treat a partner," Ettin said.

Dogfishing also requires an accomplice — the dog owner. Johnny Nguyen, 21, loves to dote on his girls — Lucy, a golden retriever, and Lulu, a Pomeranian. He's aware that they help create rapport with women, but now the Sydney, Australia, resident has a girlfriend.

Since then, his male friends have leaped at the chance to borrow Lucy (the friendlier dog) for their own dating purposes. "They would come over with a girl, introduce her to the dog and go to the park together," he said. This happens a few times a year.

Dog talk doesn't always signal compatibility. Nguyen points to his girlfriend, who is scared of his big dogs — he keeps them outside or in a separate room when she's over. But some of his friends are still convinced that owning a dog is the easiest way to a date's heart.

"I know of acquaintances who buy or adopt a dog as a means to attract women," he said. "After the dog gets older, they put it up for adoption or leave it with their parents."

In the online dating world, when the search for a partner is boiled down to quick swipes, a first impression matters even more than it does in real life.

"It's like getting your foot in the door, presenting yourself in this performative way," said online dater Gaby Wolff of Ann Arbor, Mich., of dogfishing. "Until that impression is ruined because you have to explain yourself."

WEEKEND: MUSIC



Jim Chapin

Pianoman

Bruce Hornsby's collaborative spirit showcased on new album, 'Absolute Zero'

By Jon Bream
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

What do Bon Iver's Justin Vernon, Grateful Dead lyricist Robert Hunter and filmmaker Spike Lee have in common?

They all had a hand in Grammy-winning pianist Bruce Hornsby's daring new album, "Absolute Zero." As you can imagine, it's stylistically unclassifiable and enrichingly trippy.

Hornsby has been scoring Lee's projects — mostly his indie films and the Netflix series "She's Gotta Have It" — for more than a decade. They met when Lee directed videos for Hornsby in 1995.

"I've written 230-plus pieces of music [for Lee] ranging from 1 minute long to 4 minutes," said Hornsby. "Lots of these instrumental pieces — we call them cues — are fully formed. They wanted to be developed into songs.

"Fully six or seven of the songs on 'Absolute Zero' have their origin in Spike Lee film cues." It was a "crazy, intangible, strange process," he said, "putting words to an already completed musical picture."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37



Sarah Walor

"I'm everywhere and nowhere. I'm not part of any club. I've always been creatively restless.

Bruce Hornsby

WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

FROM PAGE 36

His process with Hunter is also unconventional.

The pianist, who toured with the Dead from 1990 to '92 and has since sat in with various Dead musicians, had teamed up with Hunter on three previous pieces before working on "Take You There (Misty)" for this new album.

Hunter reached out to him in 2008. They've been writing long-distance ever since.

"It's a bit like Elton John and Bernie Taupin in the sense that Bernie would write the lyrics and send them to Elton," said Hornsby. "I haven't seen Bob Hunter since 1997 at the second Furthur Festival at Alpine Valley" in Wisconsin.

As for Vernon, the Bon Iver frontman has long been a fan of Hornsby. In 2015, he invited the pianist to join him for "Black Muddy River" on a Dead tribute record. The next year, Hornsby performed his entire 1986 debut album, "The Way It Is," at Vernon's Eaux Claires festival. In 2017, Hornsby was a special guest during Bon Iver's performance at the Coachella fest in California.

"When Justin starts singing in an isolation booth [at a recording studio], the air changes in the room," Hornsby observed. "There's excitement and possibilities because he's such a creative force. He has his own unique vision and approach. He brings a ton to the table. And he's a great person and a great hang. That's a fairly unbeatable combination."

Other Eaux Claires performers ended up on "Absolute Zero," including the Brooklyn chamber group yMusic and British harmonizers the Staves as well as guitarist Blake Mills and esteemed jazz drummer Jack DeJohnette.

Vernon and Hornsby have worked on several tunes together. Hornsby appears on Bon Iver's new single "U (Man Like)" — from the group's fourth album, "I, I" (due Aug. 30) — while Vernon sings on Hornsby's new "Cast Off." Both were recorded last year in Vernon's studio near Eau Claire, Wis., along with about five other tunes.

Hornsby welcomes collaboration and he loves improvisation.

In fact, his signature hit, "The Way It Is," was, as he describes it, a folkie tune about racism with two jazz piano solo improvisations. "That is hardly a formula for pop success," he pointed out.

His 20 studio albums have explored jazz, electronica blues, Americana, bluegrass (with Ricky Skaggs), Appalachian (he played dulcimer) and all kinds of experimental sounds influenced by everyone from Steve Reich to Father John Misty.

"I'm everywhere and nowhere," he said with a chuckle. "I'm not part of any club. I've always been creatively restless."

In addition to his own projects, Hornsby, 64, has been an in-demand studio pianist, recording with Bonnie Raitt (on "I Can't Make You Love Me"), Don Henley (they co-wrote "End of the Innocence") and Bob Dylan (the album "Under the Red Sky").

One time during a Dylan recording session, Hornsby was jamming on a chord with bassist Randy Jackson, drummer Kenny Aronoff and guitarist Robben Ford.

"And Bob walks in," Hornsby recalled. "He had all these lyric sheets — written on everything from hotel paper to napkins — spread out on a table. He looked around and picked a lyric and just started singing to this track. That became a song on the record called 'T.V.-Talkin' Song.'

"He's a spontaneous improvising musician. I feel a kindred spirit that way."



Marc Cohn and Blind Boys of Alabama

Work to Do (BMG)

Marc Cohn and the Blind Boys of Alabama's new album began as an EP of studio recordings before being wisely extended with their performance for the PBS concert series "The Kate."

The album kicks off with the gospel standard "Walk in Jerusalem" and its enthusiasm and joyous beat, to paraphrase a line from Cohn's biggest hit, may make you a Christian, at least while you listen. The other songs meant for the EP, the Cohn-penned title track and "Talk Back Mic," co-written with producer John Leventhal, are also excellent and make one yearn for a full studio effort.

Still, the live renditions have their own charms and Cohn, who is a fan of "Loves Me Like A Rock" and other Paul Simon-Dixie Hummingbirds collaborations, blends in similarly well with the Blind Boys' seasoned ensemble led by Jimmy Carter along with Eric "Ricky" McKinnie, Joey Williams, Ben Moore and Paul Beasley.

"Walking in Memphis," as Bob Geldof says about his own hits, has been very kind to Cohn and this version is both more stripped down and more impassioned than the original, with the contribution of Carter, who's close to needing 90 candles on his birthday cake, especially notable.

"Silver Thunderbird," which is less about the car than the man who drove it — Cohn's father — is akin to an extended superstar guitar jam, its nearly 10 minutes flying by with entertaining vocal spotlights. The other songs are also from the Cohn catalog, with the Blind Boys especially uplifting on "Baby King" and "One Safe Place."

The sole exception is the Blind Boys' take on "Amazing Grace" sung with the melody of "The House of the Rising Sun," which they've recorded before and is less shocking than it may seem in theory. In practice, however, it's rather a sweet sound, just like the rest of "Work to Do."

— Pablo Gorondi
Associated Press



Marc Cohn (center) and Blind Boys of Alabama
All Eyes Media

Love on the spectrum

Romance novelist Helen Hoang used her autism diagnosis as inspiration in writing 'Bride Test,' 'Kiss Quotient'

BY LISA BONOS
The Washington Post

When Helen Hoang was 12 years old, she skipped lunch for an entire week, hoarding her lunch money so she could buy something more delicious than a midday meal: her first romance novel.

Hoang soon realized love stories would feed her in a way nothing else could. Back then, she struggled with simple interactions but didn't know why. Getting lost in a romance novel gave her the vicarious thrill of falling in love without having to talk to or touch anyone.

"I felt like I was buying drugs or porn," Hoang said of that first purchase, noting that she tried to hide her obsession from her parents by picking covers and titles that didn't scream sex. Eventually she amassed an entire shelf of bodice-rippers. And by the end of high school, she'd written her own. Hoang's first reader was her father, who warned: "If you're going to be a writer, you're going to be poor."

That paternal pronouncement, plus Hoang's sense that "growing up" meant quitting romance novels, led her to abandon them in college. But her brain kept chasing the endorphin rush of imagining two people in the throes of passion. At night she would lie awake for hours, drafting love stories in her head. She tried working in finance and managing her mother's eucalyptus farm, but she was miserable. After Hoang gave birth to her first child eight years ago, she allowed herself to write again.

Now, 25 years since she rode her bicycle to Kmart to buy that first romance novel, Hoang, 37, has published two of her own: "The Kiss Quotient" and "The Bride Test," both of which have gotten rave reviews and "best of" accolades. A screenplay for "The Kiss Quotient" is in the works. Her third book ("The Heart Principle") is set to publish next year.

She is not poor. She is incredibly successful in a genre that is difficult to break into, especially for women of color. And she's figured out why socializing has always been difficult: At age 34, Hoang learned she had Asperger's syndrome, a high-functioning type of autism. That revelation inspired her to create characters who are also on the autism spectrum, a trait that had yet to be explored in the romance genre and is resonating with readers.

"The Kiss Quotient," for example, follows Stella, a young woman with Asperger's who's never enjoyed sex, so she hires an escort, Michael, to teach her to be comfortable in the bedroom. Stella's path to a happy ending is littered with obstacles, from her discomfort with human touch to her frank — and sometimes unintentionally insensitive — conversation style. The portrayal is a revelation, both for readers with Asperger's, who have never seen themselves so accurately or compassionately depicted, and those without, who gain a better understanding of the difficulties of finding love on the spectrum.

For Hoang, receiving a diagnosis was healing. "I felt that I could sort of grieve for that girl that I was," Hoang said in an interview at her home recently, describing her childhood as a time she was "drowning in loneliness." If she'd known why it was so hard for her to make friends, perhaps those years would have been less isolating.

Instead, Hoang expended an extreme amount of effort to fit in as a teenager, often with little success. "I remember there was a time when this girl — she told me that my facial expressions were scary," Hoang said, noting that she would study the faces people made on television and in real life and practice them in the mirror.





PEGGY PEATTIE/For The Washington Post

Novelist Helen Hoang discusses incorporating characters who have autism into her work at her home in San Diego.

Hoang also relates to Michael, a character with Vietnamese roots, a mother who's battling cancer and a distant father. Michael, just as much as Stella, has to work through his insecurities to see himself as worthy of love. The next book in Hoang's series, "The Bride Test," follows Michael's autistic cousin, Khai, whose mother travels to Vietnam to find him a wife. There she picks Esme Tran, who agrees to spend a summer at Khai's house near San Francisco, where cultural miscommunications are just as disorienting as social ones. Hoang's nuanced portrayal shows how the condition can look different in a man. For starters, they don't try as hard to fit in.

Hoang's books and her own love story show that misreading social cues isn't always a hindrance. When Hoang was an undergraduate at Cornell University in the early 2000s, she asked her martial arts instructor to lunch. "Oh no, I already ate," Hoang recalls him saying. Hoang wasn't deterred. The next time, she inquired about dinner. Again, he'd already eaten. The next time, she had a new proposition: Dessert? He didn't like sweets before bed. Someone else might have gotten dissuaded, interpreting this man's "no thanks" as lack of interest. But the teacher didn't realize his student was asking him out. Eventually, on about the sixth try, he agreed to see a movie with Hoang and realized halfway through that this was a date.

"I basically ran him down like a stag," Hoang said with a chuckle, of the martial arts teacher who's now her husband. "He's a physicist," Hoang said, as if being a scientist is code for clueless. Over a decade later, Hoang's husband is a lot more observant: Without her vocalizing it, he can tell when she just needs to sit on the couch and let her brain unwind.

Hoang is so high-functioning — "for me it doesn't feel like a disability," she said of her autism — that she doesn't always feel comfortable taking on the label. But the diagnosis has helped her better understand herself and set boundaries. She doesn't do book tours or in-person signings, for example. She doesn't always get jokes or grasp when she's being made fun of. The day we met for lunch at a Vietnamese restaurant near her home, Hoang brought a Rubik's-style cube, so she could twist anytime there was a lull in conversation.

In Hoang's world, cubing is a verb and a calming practice. It is a way to be present without having to engage with those around her. There are no social cues to read, only an algorithm to master.

Making eye contact takes more effort than it might for someone else. But ask Hoang about writing a sex scene, and her gaze becomes laser-focused. Like a choreographer directing her dancers how they should move and what emotions their bodies should evoke, Hoang lays out the key elements. A good love scene, she said with intensity and precision, "needs to have a purpose and it needs to be moving the story forward," she said. It should never be gratuitous. The love scenes in her books focus on establishing trust first and then building intimacy.

Hoang still carries a touch of the shame she felt as a teenager who didn't want her parents to know what she was reading. Her mother was dying of cancer while "The Kiss Quotient" was in the midst of taking off, so she wasn't fully present for the highs of that journey. Hoang and her father have been estranged for years, but she had to let him know that she'd been diagnosed with autism (he's on the spectrum as well) — and that she'd defied his prophecy about her career. She told him she'd written a book but wouldn't give him her pen name. She doesn't even let her husband read her books in full, even though she might show him a few paragraphs here and there.

"There is sexual content that is not appropriate for him," Hoang deadpans.

WEEKEND: ENTERTAINMENT

NEW ON DVD

"Avengers: Endgame": The film doesn't even have a flaw small enough for Ant-Man to wiggle through. The production is so strong that even if you have not seen any of the other 21 films leading up to it or read a Marvel comic book, it would still be a gift of massive action sequences and emotional highs to lows.

Those who have been loyal fans are presented with a film directed by Joe and Anthony Russo that blends together major and minor characters, big and little plot lines and massive and insignificant moments to create a masterful presentation. It had looked like the Marvel Cinematic Universe had peaked with "Captain America: Winter Soldier" or "Black Panther," but "Avengers: Endgame" has set a new and heavenly high standard for the comic book action film.



Marvel-Disney

Robert Downey Jr. and Chris Evans are part of the huge cast of "Avengers: Endgame."

"Finding Steve McQueen": Director Mark Steven Johnson's latest effort isn't perfect. Or halfway perfect. Or even one-quarter perfect. But he does take what would have been a rather bland heist story and mix it with a mediocre love story to create an enjoyable final product. It's an example of getting the most out of the material. A major part of that success comes from strong enough casting to lift up the uninspired script by Ken Hixon and Keith Sharon.

Half the movie is based on the true story of one of the biggest bank robberies in United States history. A ragtag group of crooks from Ohio in 1972 decide to travel to California to break into a bank where they have been told President Richard Nixon is hiding $30 million in illegal campaign contributions. The other half revolves around the selection of the driver for the team, Harry Barber (Travis Fimmel).

Also available on DVD:

"The Blacklist: Season Six": Elizabeth Keen (Megan Boone) is torn between the relationship with the man she assumed was her father and her desire to know the truth.

"The Reflecting Skin": Viggo Mortensen stars in the 1990 film about a small town living in fear of a deadly killer.

"Peter, Paul and Mary at Newport 1963-65": Includes archival performances filmed at the folk festival at Newport, R.I.

"Vice Squad": Season Hubley plays a woman who is a single mom by day and a prostitute by night in this 1982 film.

"The Spanish Princess": Catherine of Aragon must find a way to stay on the throne after her husband dies.

"New Amsterdam: Season 1": A doctor makes bold changes to a hospital to put more emphasis on patients.

"All Is True": William Shakespeare (Kenneth Branagh) looks to find some peace in the final years of his life.

"NOVA: Lost Viking Army": The mystery behind 300 skeletons unearthed in a mass grave is examined.

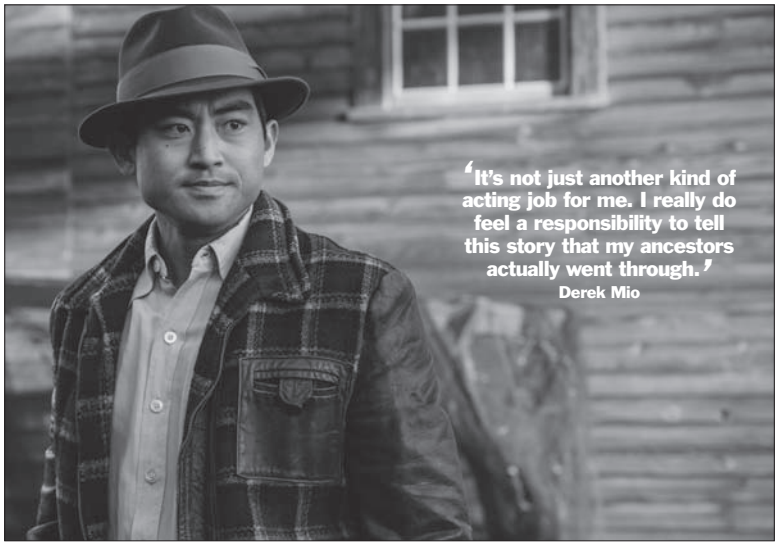
"Vault": Two small-time crooks do battle with the mafia. Don Johnson stars.

"Teacher": A high school English teacher goes to disturbing lengths to protect his favorite students from bullies.

"Rafiki": Two young women fall in love in a country that criminalizes homosexuality.

"Shadow": A military commander has a secret weapon in a kingdom ruled by a young and unpredictable king.

— Rick Bentley/Tribune News Service



AMC photos

Derek Mio, above, stars as Chester Nakayama in "The Terror: Infamy." The second season of the drama series follows the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The season premiere airs Saturday on AFN-Prime.

'The Terror' is real

TV drama's second season confronts WWII internment of Japanese Americans

By Russell Contreras and Terry Tang
Associated Press

The second season of an AMC-TV drama series follows the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II and a number of bizarre deaths haunting a community.

"The Terror: Infamy" premieres Saturday on AFN-Prime and stars Derek Mio and original Star Trek cast member George Takei as they navigate the forced internment and supernatural spirits that surround them.

It's the first television series depicting the internment of Japanese Americans on such a massive scale, and camps were re-created with detail to illustrate the conditions and racism internees faced.

The show's new season is part of the Ridley Scott-produced anthology series.

Mio, who is fourth-generation Japanese American and plays Chester Nakayama, said he liked the idea of adding a supernatural element to a historical event such as Japanese American internment. He says he had relatives who lived on Terminal Island outside of Los Angeles and were taken to camps.

Residents there were some of the first forced into internment camps after the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

"If you add the supernatural element, it's a little more accessible and now it's like a mainstream subject and it can open up more discussion about what really happened and what's going on right now," Mio said.

It was a role personal to him as well. "It's not just another kind of acting job for me," Mio said. "I really do feel a responsibility to tell this story that my ancestors actually went through."

From 1942 to 1945, more than 110,000 Japanese Americans were ordered to camps in California, Colorado, Idaho, Arizona, Wyoming, Utah, Texas, Arkansas, New Mexico and other sites.

Executive Order 9066, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, forced Japanese Americans, regardless of loyalty or citizenship, to leave the West Coast and other areas for the camps surrounded by barbed wire and military police. Half of those detainees were children.

Takei, who was interned in a camp as a child, said he was impressed with the show's research into re-creating the camp.

"The barracks reminded me again — mentally, I was able to go back to my childhood. That's exactly the way it was," Takei said. "So for me, it was both fulfilling to raise the awareness to this extent of the terror. But also to make the storytelling that much more compelling."

The series also involves others who are connected to historic World War II events. Josef Kubota Wladyka, one of the show's directors, had a grandfather who was in Hiroshima when the atomic bomb dropped and managed to survive.

Max Borenstein, one of the show's executive producers who lost relatives at the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland, said the show's horror genre still doesn't compare to the horror of the internment camp.



Original Star Trek cast member George Takei, who was interned in a Japanese American camp as a child, is part of the cast of "The Terror: Infamy."

"It was important to do the research, the lived reality that people faced," Borenstein said. "The fact of taking people who are citizens of the country and (putting them in camps) is a great stain of our country."

Co-creator Alexander Woo, who is Chinese American, said he believes the series is especially relevant now given the debate over immigration in the U.S. and Europe.

"The struggle that immigrants go through of embracing a country that doesn't embrace you back is a story, unfortunately, that keeps repeating," Woo said. "There's going to be some people who likely didn't know of the internment. There will be some people who had relatives in camps. We have a responsibility to be accurate."



BURNING QUESTION

Think you have athlete's foot? Here's how to treat it and avoid more serious problems

Keeping your feet clean and dry is important, especially if you wear closed shoes and if you exercise. "Running shoes are petri dishes — dark, warm and salty," ideal for fungal growth, says dermatologist Adam Friedman.
iStock

By Jill U. Adams
Special to The Washington Post

Perhaps the skin in between your toes is itchy. Or the skin on the sides of your feet is flaking and irritated.

These are classic signs of athlete's foot. Doctors call it tinea pedis and it's a common fungal infection, affecting 15 to 25 percent of people at any one time.

"It's flaky dead skin overlying redness," says Adam Friedman, a dermatologist at George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Skin between the toes may look white and soggy, the soles of the foot are more likely to be dry and flaky, and reddening and blistering can appear anywhere.

Athlete's foot might start out scaly red, but if it becomes red, swollen and painful, it's a warning sign of something else. Inflammation might indicate a bacterial infection, even a serious one such as cellulitis.

Still it might be something else — psoriasis and eczema can look a lot like athlete's foot.

So how can you be sure you have athlete's foot? Do you need to see a doctor for diagnosis and treatment?

"Most people want to treat athlete's foot," says Shari Lipner, a dermatologist at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York. Even when the itching and burning symptoms are very mild, the condition is unsightly. Also, the fungus can invade the nail — and nail fungus is much harder to treat, Lipner says.

But you don't necessarily need to see a doctor. It's OK to try an over-the-counter product on your own. Look for those that contain an antifungal medication such as terbinafine (Lamisil), clotrimazole (Lotrimin), tolnaftate (Tinactin), miconazole (Micatin), or undecylenic acid (Cruex). Other products, such as those containing tea tree oil or "natural" salts, have little evidence to back their use, Lipner says.

"Generally, we recommend treating for about a month," Lipner says.

But if your symptoms don't improve after a couple of weeks, you should probably see a doctor.

Friedman says even doctors cannot always identify athlete's foot correctly. He says he found that dermatologists looking at still images may make errors in identifying various skin conditions. And errors can have consequences. Steroid creams, for example, might be appropriate for eczema but can make athlete's foot worse.

Dermatologists can diagnose athlete's foot by taking fungal cultures or doing a two-minute in-office procedure, called a potassium hydroxide (KOH) test.

The fungi involved are usually one of two species of Trichophyton, either rubrum or mentagrophytes.

"Our skin cells are foie gras to them," Friedman says. "These organisms just like the top layer of skin." But when fungus take up residence on the surface, he says, "They can open the door to bacteria and other infections to cross the barrier."

For instance, athlete's foot might start out scaly red, but if it becomes red, swollen and painful, it's a warning sign of something else. Inflammation might indicate a bacterial infection, even a serious one such as cellulitis.

Untreated athlete's foot means you're harboring fungal growth. That fungus can spread to the toenails to cause a condition called onychomycosis — or more simply, toenail fungus.

"With nail fungus, it's even more important to see a board-certified dermatologist," Lipner says. "Lots of things make the nails look abnormal. About 50 percent of the time, it's nail fungus."

Over-the-counter ointments, powders and sprays don't work against nail fungus. Typically, this condition is treated with oral antifungal medications, or one of the newer topical preparations, which are pricey and by prescription only.

It's important to treat nail fungus because it serves as a reservoir of organisms, Friedman says. The first-line treatment is oral terbinafine — "A pill a day for three months," he says. Toenails grow slowly, so you'll have to wait for the unsightliness to grow out. "It can take a year to look normal," Friedman says.

Once you've rid yourself of athlete's foot, you might want to focus on preventive measures. Lipner advises wearing flip flops on pool decks and in locker room showers, wearing moisture-wicking socks and keeping your nails short.

"Probably the biggest risk factor is a family member with athlete's foot," Lipner says. You're sharing floors and showers in your home. "Genetics may play a role, but exposure is the key thing."

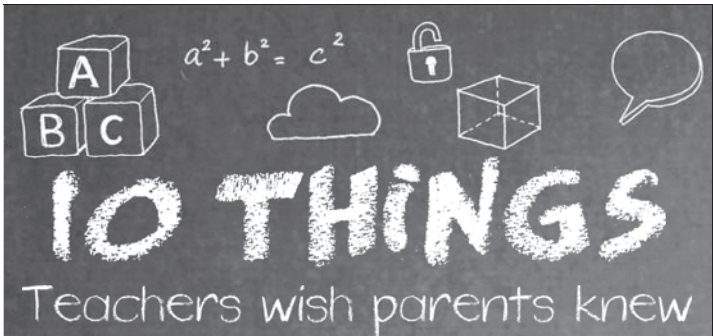
Keeping your feet clean and dry is important, especially if you wear closed shoes and if you exercise. "Running shoes are petri dishes — dark, warm and salty," Friedman says, ideal for fungal growth.

Still, Friedman says dry skin on your feet also can be a problem. Fungus in our environment is looking for a way to latch on. Dry cracked skin offers that opportunity. So moisturizing your feet regularly can help.

If you're prone to athlete's foot or have a history of nail fungus, Lipner recommends daily treatment with a drugstore antifungal product — it reduces your chance of recurrence threefold, she says.

"Athlete's foot tends to be a chronic condition," Lipner says. "Expect it to come back. Expect to treat it again."

WEEKEND: FAMILY



By Beth Whitehouse
Newsday

With a new school year kicking off, we asked teachers to share 10 things they wish parents knew as the journey begins. Here's how teachers across Long Island, N.Y., completed the prompt: "I wish parents knew. ..."

How critical it is for kids to arrive at school on time. Teachers plan the school day to "entice, captivate, intrigue and motivate students," says Linda Grace, a kindergarten teacher at Centre Avenue Elementary School in East Rockaway. She likens the classroom to the stage. "When the bell rings, my Broadway show begins," she says. Imagine the lights suddenly come on five minutes into the performance. "Wait! We have a new audience member. We have to catch that audience member up on what's happened so far," she says. "I feel bad for the child. We're settled, and we've started our day, and the kid walks in with their backpack and everyone is staring at them. It's a lot of negative attention when they walk in."

That test grades might not be the best measure of success. "I wish parents would de-emphasize the identification of success with test grades. To put that on a 12- or 13-year-old leads to anxiety," says Christopher Regini, a seventh-grade science teacher at West Hollow Middle School in Melville. Instead, parents ought to give just as much weight to soft skills their child is learning, such as cooperation, collaboration and empathy, Regini says.

What genre their child likes to read. When students find a genre that sparks their interest, it makes it easier to encourage them to read, says Kristin Maldonado, a second-grade teacher at the Brookside Elementary School in Baldwin.

That kids are capable of more than parents think. "You want them to be independent," says Maria McMullen, a first-grade teacher at Holbrook Road Elementary School in Centereach. At the end of the school day, for instance, McMullen expects her students to pack up their own backpacks. "I can't put 25 folders into 25 backpacks," McMullen says. "They have to start being responsible. They can do it." Parents should expect the same at home, she says. "It's amazing to see what a 5- or 6-year-old does when their mom is not around."

The power of "yet." Tova Moskowitz, a reading teacher at Lido Elementary School in Long Beach, borrows that expression from author Carol Dweck. While children might struggle, it's important for parents to remember there's always growth. Instead of saying, "My child can't read," parents should say to themselves, "My child isn't reading YET," Moskowitz says. "I truly believe in a growth mindset." Denis Dagger, an eighth-grade math teacher at Grand Avenue Middle School in Bellmore, echoes Moskowitz. "You have to work at it," he says of learning mathematics. "It's not about getting the 100 right away. It's a process. ... It's where you end up, not where you are."

That teachers do homework, too. "Teachers put time in even when they're not in the classroom. Some parents don't realize we're prepping and getting everything ready to make school fun for every child," says Kevin Chenicek, a third-grade teacher at Northside Elementary School in Levittown.

A misstep is not a failure. "Sometimes in special education, it's the baby steps that get your child where you want them to be," says Nyree Francis, a fifth-grade special education teacher at Davison Avenue Intermediate School in Lynbrook. "A misstep is not a failure. A misstep is information. It tells me we need to review material, or that a child is not developmentally ready for this step yet."

That students' mental health is key. "Today's kids have a lot on their plate," says Gary Zamek, a sixth-grade teacher at Longwood Middle School in Middle Island. "The increased rigor of academics, higher expectations in sports, and social media and bullying have contributed to students' stress and anxiety. Addressing these mental health issues is just as important as academics."

That they should play games. "I wish parents knew there are a lot of things they could do with their kids that would increase their critical thinking," says Stephanie Sullo, a fifth-grade teacher at Dutch Lane Elementary School in Hicksville. Family game nights featuring Yahtzee, Uno or Monopoly, for instance, help kids practice math and reading skills, she says.

That they can relax. "I feel like some parents, at the beginning of the school year, they're very nervous. When your child is having any kind of new experience, there's anxiety," says Jessica Lowenhar, a music teacher at Oldfield Middle School in Greenlawn. "I wish parents knew that as teachers, we try to do everything we can to make the school year start off well for the students."



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THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



One giant leap for military spouses

While Congress hashes out the details of President Donald Trump's proposed "U.S. Space Force" — who will oversee it, how many personnel are needed, whether we can afford it, where will it be located — I am selfishly wondering what the future holds for the military spouse community after this sixth branch of the armed forces stands up.

If Trump's plan is implemented, there will be 15,000 personnel serving in the Space Force in 2024. Since about 51 percent of military servicepeople are married, that means there could be up to eight thousand new Space Force military spouses in a few years.

What will life be like for Space Force spouses, and what effect will they have on our military spouse community?

As a military spouse of many years, I've learned that, although we undoubtedly have our fellow spouses' backs when the chips are down, we're also pretty competitive. If I had a dollar for every time I heard military wives brag about how many times their husbands were deployed, or how long their husbands' deployments were, or how many times they've PCSed, or how many pieces of furniture were broken in their moves, I'd have enough money to replace the microwave cart our military movers broke back in '98 during move number three.

Throw eight thousand Space Force spouses into the milspouse mix, and they'll beat the rest of us Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast Guard wives and husbands, hands down. Imagine, if you will, a typical spouses club brunch, in a combined club dining room, on a joint base a decade from now. Spouses from the various branches exchange idle chit chat at their table while they wait for crystal bingo to begin.

"Billy's going downrange again," one Army wife laments with a pitiful sigh.

"Jimmy's been at sea all summer," a Coast Guard wife moans, spearing a cube of cantaloupe with her fork.

"Tammy's off to Bosnia for 170 days," an Air Force husband says while picking mournfully at his quiche.

"Ricky's halfway through his one-year IA tour," a Marine wife sighs while absently buttering a croissant.

"When Johnny's done with workups," a Navy wife says with a pregnant pause, "he goes out on a carrier for another nine-month deployment. ... It's his third." She sips her mimosa with smug satisfaction. Her life is most definitely the worst, she thinks with pride.

But then, the Space Force wife chimes in. "Frankie was supposed to be home from the Lunar Station before our fifth PCS, but his unit got sucked into a wormhole during a routine expedition, and now they're telling me he won't be back until 2050. The good news is, he's promised to bring home jewelry from the Mars BX."

The other spouses slump in their chairs in silent defeat.

The existence of a U.S. Space Force presents more ridiculous scenarios than there are stars in the galaxy, but we'd better buckle up and get ready to blast off, because it's coming in 2020 whether we like it or not. Before long, this new corps of superior military spouses will be prancing around our base neighborhoods like Jane Jetson, sipping Tang martinis and bragging about their spouses' latest exploits on the final frontier. Our own tales of our spouses' experiences with state-of-the-art ships, tanks, drones, cyber technology, missiles and fighter jets will be dwarfed by their stories of rocket launches and moon landings.

There's no way for us to compete without looking pathetic. What can we say? "Well, at least Navy wives don't put freeze-dried snickerdoodles in our husbands' care packages! Take that, you fancy Space Cadet wives!"

Let's face it — the best thing for military spouses to do is to stop competing altogether. Why do we pit ourselves against one another in a competition for who has it worse, anyway? It's pretty ridiculous when you think about it. We all face the ups, downs, rewards and challenges of this unique lifestyle. So whether our spouses fulfill their duty to serve on land or sea, in air or outer space, let's all take this giant leap into the future — together.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

CONSTANT CONSONANTS

BY WILL NEDIGER / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

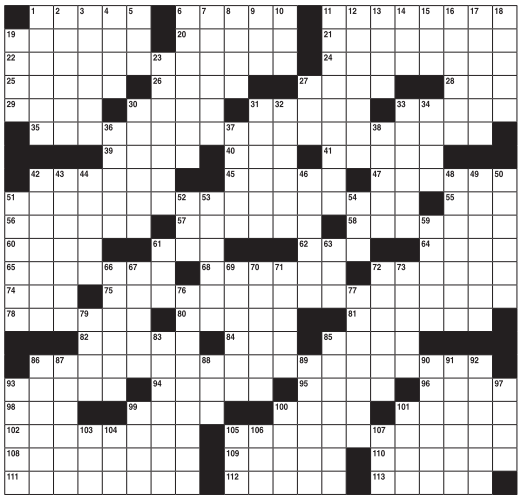
Will Nediger, of London, Ontario, is a professional crossword constructor and writer of trivia questions. Since early May he has edited a free weekly online crossword for Spyscape, a spy museum in New York City. Besides an unusual theme and a more wide-open construction than usual, this puzzle has some particularly fresh, imaginative cluing, including 40-Across, 100-Across (which made us smile) and 50-Down. — W.S.

ACROSS

1 Socializes (with)
6 With 20-Across, fire the whole staff
11 Most exorbitant
19 Showing more craft
20 See 6-Across
21 Artillery
22 With 105-Across, "What walks on four dino legs in the morning, four dino legs at noon and four dino legs in the evening?" and other riddles?
24 Genre for "Rush Hour" and "Lethal Weapon"
25 Oversupplies
26 The band Ben Folds Five, oddly
27 The "A" of BART
28 Any nonzero number to the zeroth power
29 "Little Women" sister
30 Pioneering silent director Weber
31 Bitter
33 Shopping binge
35 Says "Quack" instead of "Buzz"?
39 Like Cinderella's stepsisters
40 Like tennis player Anna Smashnova's name
41 "High-five!"
42 Melodic opera passages
45 Something a new parent might take
47 Audio engineer's device
51 Tables in an Old West saloon, e.g.?
55 "My Gal ____"
56 Admirer's words
57 Source of hand-me-downs
58 Unloading sign
60 The stuff of legends
61 Member of the Be Sharps, Homer Simpson's barbershop quartet
62 Kerfuffle
64 Olympic powerhouse in boxing
65 Confuse "stem" with "stem," e.g.
68 Claude ____, villain in "The Hunchback of Notre-Dame"
72 Some Dior dresses
74 Change to the Constitution first proposed in 1921, for short
75 Chess gambit employed by gangster Tony Montana?
78 Separate
80 Invite out for
81 Things that may be kicked
82 Verse, quaintly
84 English novelist McEwan
85 "Je t'____"
86 Claims that Louis XIV's palace is better than all the other buildings in France combined?
93 In the middle of, old-style
94 Parishioner's offering
95 Menaces to Indiana Jones
96 Really big show
98 Side in checkers
99 Not tread lightly
100 Advertising claim that usually has a catch
101 Animal with a flexible snout
102 "From my standpoint …"
105 See 22-Across
108 Most brave
109 Increase
110 Start to type?
111 Nickname for the capital of the Peach State
112 KFC order
113 Groups of stars

DOWN

1 Site of a 1920s renaissance
2 Relative of a guinea pig
3 Last innings, typically
4 Figures out
5 Sign of theatrical success
6 Subject of a fund-raiser
7 Thelma's road-trip partner
8 Currency with a "zone"
9 Tempe sch.
10 Old game console, for short
11 Nickname
12 Aligned
13 Icelandic literary work
14 Where a tunnel opens
15 "You'll ____ for this!"
16 Extra couple of numbers?
17 Tea treats
18 Mobile home not much seen nowadays
19 Bygone N.Y.C. punk club
23 Informer
27 "____ longa, vita brevis"
30 Brings from outside with great effort
31 A in physics
32 Trig ratios
33 Pack rat
34 User of the Twitter handle @Pontifex
36 Target number
37 It's a blessing
38 Person who helps with a crash, informally
42 Large wardrobe
43 Finds hilarious, perhaps
44 Deduce
46 A doctor might check them
48 Together
49 Full-bodied Argentine wines
50 Word often said with a drawn-out "e" sound
51 Took shots
52 Single squat or crunch
53 Small goofs
54 Craft in a close encounter
59 54-Down genre
61 ____-compliant
63 Doomed to fail, for short
66 Motorcade head
67 Tender feelings
69 Debonair
70 La-la interval
71 Sierra ____
72 Friend of Athos and Porthos
73 Smear in print
76 "GoodFellas" co-star
77 Onetime fad item with replacement seeds
79 Culmination
83 Songs to be played at a concert
85 Gives the nod
86 Has because of
87 Portmanteau for a TV addict
88 Inc. relative
89 ____ to go
90 Some deals from dealerships
91 Whiz
92 Church toppers
93 Completely destroy
97 Approximately
99 Hammer part
100 Half-man/half-goat
101 "Toodle-oo!"
103 South, in Brazil
104 Texted question to someone who hasn't shown up yet
105 Automotive initialism
106 Louis XIV, e.g.
107 Key in a corner

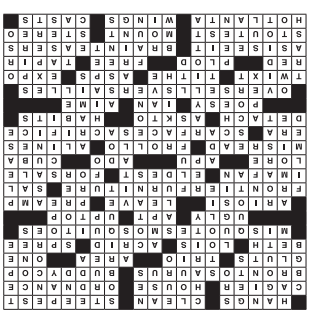


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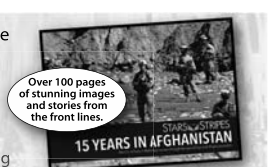


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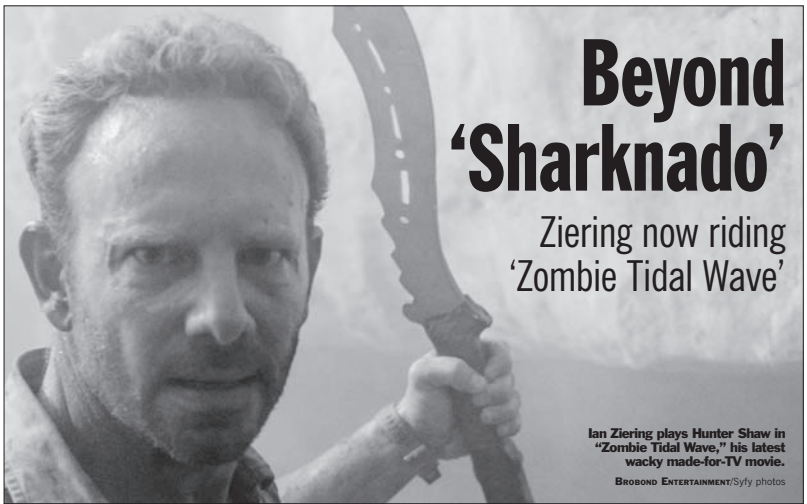
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FACES



Beyond 'Sharknado'

Ziering now riding 'Zombie Tidal Wave'

Ian Ziering plays Hunter Shaw in "Zombie Tidal Wave," his latest wacky made-for-TV movie.

BROBOND ENTERTAINMENT/Syfy photos

BY RICK BENTLEY
Tribune News Service

You can blame (or thank) President Donald Trump for the wave of zombies that will hit next week. It was Ian Ziering's time on "The Apprentice" that gave the "Beverly Hills, 90210" and "Sharknado" actor the confidence he needed to produce his own sci-fi/fantasy film, "Zombie Tidal Wave."

"After I was a successful project manager for others on 'The Apprentice,' and learning that I had a skill set I didn't know I possessed, I decided to employ those skills for my own projects," Ziering says. "Using those attributes, I put a project together. I put all of the puzzle pieces together and created something I could get the interest of a network to get behind.

"I came to them with a project that had the star from 'Sharknado.' One that used the same director from 'Sharknado.' One that partnered with the original writer of 'Sharknado.' And, it was a pretty desirable package."

Once Ziering knew he could handle the needed elements to put together a movie, he pitched the project to Syfy because he had a good working relationship with the network through the "Sharknado" movies. He was ready to take "Zombie Tidal Wave" to other studios if necessary, but the Syfy team was on board immediately. It took a couple of years to get the project made because Ziering was busy making the last "Sharknado" films.

Ziering had added pressures with "Zombie Tidal Wave" because it was his project, but the movie and all the "Sharknado" offerings have been fun acting jobs.

"Zombie Tidal Wave" hits at the same time Ziering can be seen in the short-run Fox series "BH90210." The New Jersey native and most of the cast members from the '90s series have reunited for the series that has the actors playing heightened versions of themselves. The idea is they are responding to fan demands to reboot the series.

Cast members have been asked for 19 years to return to the roles. Ziering's theory to why the show remains so popular is when it originally aired, it was one of the first productions to seriously deal with issues young people were facing.

"We did it with the backdrop of Beverly Hills, where there is a built-in allure of glitz and glamour. But that ultimately became the backdrop to the characters in the stories. That was the framework for the art," Ziering says.

Two people know Ziering better for his days battling sharks than for his days struggling with high school issues on "90210": his daughters, who are 8 and 6.

"My kids don't know '90210.' Many of our kids don't know '90210,' other than the billboards and all the ads they're seeing driving around town. They know 'Sharknado' pretty darn well, but they don't know '90210,' perhaps the biggest thing I've done in my career until now," Ziering says. "And having them understand that daddy did this show before mommy, before you guys were born. There's something that they're starting to wrap their heads around."

Ziering plans to bring his daughters up to speed on "90210" once they get older — he has every episode on a hard drive.

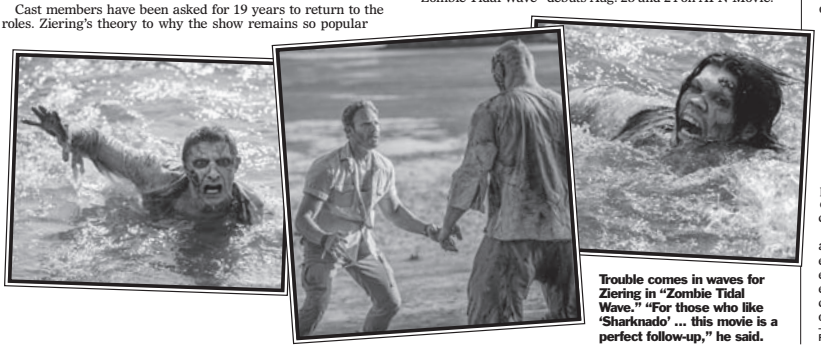
After "Beverly Hills, 90210" ended in 2000, Ziering bounced between guest-starring roles and voice work. He was excited about being part of the DC streaming series "Swamp Thing" because it gave him the chance to be a superhero, but the show was canceled after one season.

It was the 2013 tongue-in-cheek cable film "Sharknado" that sent a new charge into Ziering's career. The outlandish tale of sharks caught up in tornadoes to become killing weather phenomena spawned five sequels.

"It was quite the storm," Ziering jokes. "I certainly didn't see it coming. I don't think anyone saw it coming. The fact that we did six movies is just a testament to the voracious appetite the audience for that genre has.

"For those who like 'Sharknado,' likes that genre, this movie is a perfect follow-up to that kind of thing."

"Zombie Tidal Wave" debuts Aug. 23 and 24 on AFN-Movie.



Trouble comes in waves for Ziering in "Zombie Tidal Wave." "For those who like 'Sharknado' ... this movie is a perfect follow-up," he said.

'Old Town Road' no guarantee for CMA nomination

BY KRISTIN M. HALL
Associated Press

Though Lil Nas X has broken chart records and become a streaming juggernaut with his breakout country rap hit "Old Town Road" with Billy Ray Cyrus, the song faces an uphill challenge to get a nomination for a CMA award.

Ballots have gone out for nominations for the Country Music Association Awards, but some voters are struggling to decide how to recognize the musical phenomenon of the year, which has become the longest running No. 1 song in the history of Billboard's Hot 100.

Billboard decided "Old Town Road" wasn't a country song and pulled it off country charts early on, but the song made enough of an impact anyway that it became eligible for a number of CMA categories this year, including single of the year and song of the year. CMA voters, which include musicians, producers, songwriters, touring professionals, country radio employees and others, vote in three ballots with the final nominations typically being announced in late August or early September. The award show will air Nov. 13.

There are already signs that the song isn't getting wide support. It failed to get enough votes in the major song categories. The song only earned enough votes to be considered in the musical event category on the second ballot, which went out to voters Monday.

The song's genreless approach by mixing trap beats with a Nine Inch Nails sample and Western-themed lyrics appealed to millennials on TikTok but took Nashville's music industry by surprise. While pop, rap and rock artists have gotten CMA nominations before, it's a lot harder to earn a nomination without broad support among Nashville's labels and country radio.

"I will be shocked if it makes the final ballot," said Shane McAnally, one of country's biggest hit-makers.

6 Dove nominations for Daigle

Christian recording artist Lauren Daigle, who has had major crossover success with her single, "You Say," received six nominations Wednesday from the Gospel Music Association's Dove Awards.

Daigle's nominations include artist of the year and song of the year.

"You Say" topped both Billboard's adult contemporary and Christian airplay charts. KING & COUNTRY, Hillsong UNITED, MercyMe and TobyMac are also vying for artist of the year.

Writer/producer Wayne Haun is the overall leading nominee with 10. Recording artists Kirk Franklin and for KING & COUNTRY have five nominations each.

The awards show will be held Oct. 15 in Nashville.

Other news

■ Reality television stars **Todd and Julie Chrisley** pleaded not guilty Wednesday to tax evasion and other federal charges that their lawyers said stemmed from false allegations made by a former employee. The 12-count indictment also accuses the "Chrisley Knows Best" stars of conspiracy, bank fraud and wire fraud.

■ Country musician **Zac Brown** has lost a bid to limit snoopers on his private property in Alaska. Brown had sought to remove easements allowing access along his property, but the bid was rejected by a planning commission on the Kenai Peninsula, south of Anchorage, KSRM-AM reported.

From The Associated Press

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OPINION

Just say no to buying Canada's drugs

By Doyle McManus
Los Angeles Times

Last week, I walked into a small-town pharmacy in rural Canada in search of lifesaving medicine: insulin.

I don't suffer from diabetes. But an estimated 30 million Americans do, and 1.5 million of them need insulin injections to stay alive. They're facing a catastrophe: the price of insulin has nearly tripled over the last decade. Many cash-strapped diabetics without good insurance have resorted to rationing their supply. Some have died.

That shouldn't happen in the world's richest country. Nor does it need to happen. The proof is next door in Canada.

At Pollard's Pharmacy in Parry Sound, Ontario, I asked if I could buy a 10 milliliter vial of Humalog, a fast-acting form of insulin that retails for $280 in Los Angeles.

"Sure," the pharmacist said, and pulled a tiny bottle out of the refrigerator. The price was about 33 U.S. dollars, roughly 12% of what it would cost in the United States.

"Pretty good price," I said.

He laughed. "The government regulates what we charge," he said.

No prescription required, either.

"Who's going to buy insulin if they don't need it?" he said. (He asked not to be identified by name; "I'm a pharmacist, not a policy expert.")

I asked for a price check on another medicine: Ciprodex, an antibiotic I recently used for an ear infection. I paid $255 at home with a prescription. In Canada, I could buy the same drug for about $49 with a prescription from a local doctor.

The reason for those dramatic gaps in cost is simple: Canada's federal government imposes price ceilings on prescription drugs.

Under Canadian law, the government can declare high prices an illegal abuse of patient rights. Drug companies can challenge the rulings, but they usually settle without court proceedings. Despite Canada's low prices, its drug companies still manage to turn a profit. Prices are even lower in most European countries.

The United States, by contrast, places few restrictions on what drug companies can charge.

Thanks to brilliant lobbying by the pharmaceutical industry, federal law even prohibits Medicare, a major buyer of drugs, from using its purchasing power to negotiate prices directly. Manufacturers negotiate with private health insurers, but that's a secretive process that produces the highest prices in the world.

It's a system that gives the industry the benefits of a free market, but strips consumers (including the government) of bargaining power.

No wonder many Americans, especially from border states such as Minnesota and Vermont, are heading north to buy their prescriptions. It's illegal to bring the drugs home, but hardly anyone is prosecuted.

And no wonder so many politicians, including Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and President Donald Trump, have stampeded toward what looks like an easy solution: allow U.S. drugstores to import drugs from Canada.

Last month, Trump announced that he's ordered the Department of Health and Human Services to propose rules under which states, wholesalers and pharmacies could buy from Canada. It sounded like a smart idea — but it's not.

First, the plan Trump announced won't cover some of the most expensive drugs, including modern forms of insulin and many cancer medicines. If you need insulin to stay alive, the president's proposal is a Potemkin drug plan: a shiny facade with nothing behind it.

Trump didn't actually change the rules; he merely asked HHS to support "pilot programs" in states that want to try importing drugs. It may take years before any plans are up and running, and that's if the pharmaceutical industry doesn't succeed in stopping them first. (The head of PhRMA, the big drug industry lobby, denounced the proposed plans as "failed polices" that could "jeopardize public safety.")

Even then, Trump's rules won't allow individuals to buy across the border. The plan is aimed at states, wholesalers and pharmacies, so the Food and Drug Administration can make sure the drugs are legitimate. Some internet sites offer pharmaceuticals from Canada, but consumer watchdogs warn that it's hard to be sure where the drugs really come from.

Second, we forgot to ask Canada what it thinks — and Canada isn't capable of supplying the whole U.S. market. There are more than 329 million people in the United States; Canada's population is 37 million, smaller than California's. The Canadian pharmaceutical sector was never designed to handle our needs.

When Trump announced his proposal, Canadian politicians and media organizations freaked out. "Donald Trump, keep your hands off our drugs," Toronto's Globe and Mail editorialized.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who's running for reelection this year, may make universal drug coverage part of his campaign. Under current law, most prescriptions are already free for Canadians under 26 or over 65; those in between have to buy private drug insurance or pay out of pocket.

Now he also has to come up with a way to fend off drug shortages if American pharmacies invade.

And that's the real point: There's something deeply disturbing about Congress and the federal government standing powerless before U.S. drug companies and relying on little Canada to bail us out.

Are price ceilings the answer? Universal drug insurance? Better, more transparent subsidies for low-income patients? Freeing Medicare to negotiate prices down? Making it easier to bring cheaper generic drugs to market?

Maybe all of the above. We're a big, smart, entrepreneurial country — at least, we used to be. We ought to be capable of solving this problem on our own.

Doyle McManus is a Washington columnist for the Los Angeles Times and director of the journalism program at Georgetown University.

No healing in Dems' talk of Ferguson 'murder'

By Jay Ambrose
Tribune News Service

Heaven help us, because politics surely isn't.

Now we have two Democratic presidential candidates saying that a white policeman was committing murder when he shot and killed an innocent black man in Ferguson, Mo. In fact, a tediously careful federal investigation cleared the officer of anything criminal, just the defense of his own life, but that has not stopped Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Kamala Harris from what is either inexcusable ignorance or spirited political opportunism helping to stir up racial enmity.

Their deceptive statements make things worse, not better, after the horrific mass shooting in El Paso, Texas, aimed at killing Hispanics. The leftist concoction today is that it's not just President Donald Trump who is a racist; it's his supporters, most Republicans, confused conservatives and of course cops, police, these villains of society.

The Ferguson incident sparked similar arguments about policemen, and soon enough we had riots in Ferguson and outrage throughout the country growing worse as other police shootings of black people occurred. The fact is that the young man who was shot, Michael Brown, had just recently stolen some cigarillos from a store and punched the policeman in the face as he sat in his car. DNA tests helped prove as much. Later the massively sized 18-year-old rushed at the policeman despite demands he stop and, if the cop had said, oh well, so what, Brown could have wrestled away his gun and blown his brains out.

Some witnesses, who happened to be black and courageous, verified this story, but here we are, five years later, and Warren and Harris are verifying their inability to serve in the White House. Even some liberal commentators are having at them, if not their debate-stage comrades named Bill de Blasio, Tim Ryan, Bernie Sanders, Kirsten Gillibrand and Beto O'Rourke. They spout a similar yarn while at least avoiding the word "murder."

Heather Mac Donald, a researcher at the Manhattan Institute, has persuasively contended that vicious condemnation of police makes police less proactive and heightened homicides and other crimes in large cities in the last two years of the critical Obama administration. The stats went down after the election of Trump, someone who spoke well of police.

There obviously are bad cops and there obviously is mistreatment of black Americans, and the Ferguson police operation did appear racially prejudiced. But a recent study published by the National Academy of Sciences shows that white policemen are no more likely to shoot black civilians than black policemen and that there is no police-shooting epidemic.

Many police around the country are right now working for better community relationships, and that is good. What's needed generally is more mutual understanding, more principled, reasonable compromise, an understanding of how slavery and Jim Crow have their sad legacies, along with an appreciation of how far we have come. All sorts of major cultural issues are at devious work behind the scenes, and we should engage with them. What we don't need is factually amiss name-calling as a substitute for debate.

To be calling everyone you disagree with a racist all the time is to trivialize this most excruciating of characterizations into just an angry, confused way of talking.

None of this is to say that Trump is an example of the better angels of our nature or that there are no rational reasons to want to replace him, but, except for a few with almost no support, the current crop of Democratic candidates does more to boggle the mind than inspire it.

Jay Ambrose is an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other stateside syndicates.

Retweeting Epstein conspiracy theories a new low for Trump

Miami Herald

Now that Jeffrey Epstein is dead and gone, the conspiracy theorists have come out of the woodwork. That's to be expected, but the president of the United States should not be among them.

Unfortunately, he is. It's a shame — though he is clearly unfamiliar with the concept — that President Donald Trump has used the suicide of the financier, with whom he was once friends, to attack his enduring nemeses — Bill and Hillary Clinton. It's pitiful.

Worse, he's looking to mine political capital by exploiting the unending pain that Epstein — a serial predator awaiting trial in New York on sex-trafficking charges — caused scores of girls and young women.

Hours after Epstein's death, conservative actor and comedian Terrence K. Williams tweeted:

"Died of SUICIDE on 24/7 SUICIDE WATCH ? Yeah right! How does that happen #JefferyEpstein had information on Bill Clinton & now he's dead I see #TrumpBodyCount trending but we know who did this! RT if you're not Surprised #EpsteinSuicide #ClintonBodyCount #ClintonCrimeFamily."

Then, just as Williams asked, the president irresponsibly retweeted the unfounded comment to his 63 million followers. We know the president lies. We know he doesn't let the facts get in the way of a good rant to his base. But his perpetuation of this outrageous Twitter bleat still is alarming.

Epstein's death was the perfect time for a president to have expressed empathy for the victims. If he had, of course, Trump would have opened himself up to accusations of hypocrisy given the sexual-assault allegations several women have made against him.

U.S. Attorney General William Barr on Monday vowed to get to the bottom of how Epstein's death occurred. He sent a welcome message to Epstein's victims: "Any co-conspirators should not rest easy."

We should wait for answers on how Epstein's life ended. The results of an autopsy by New York City's chief medical examiner should also shed light on how he died.

Still, an onslaught of conspiracy theories was born after Epstein died, and the fantasies are still alive and flourishing on social media. The president, however, should refrain from jumping into the fray.

China should instead negotiate with Hong Kong protesters

The Washington Post

Hong Kong's political battleground has expanded. Protesters who in June demanded cancellation of an extradition bill that would make it easier for suspects to be transferred to mainland China are now asking for greater democracy and an investigation of police brutality. The demonstrators have shifted tactics, too, from sprawling marches to smaller, unpredictable flash-mobs, as well as intrusions such as the airport protest on Monday that led to massive flight cancellations. China's leadership has misread the situation from the start. Time to get this right.

China gained control over Hong Kong from Britain in 1997, pledging autonomy for a city that has come to define capitalism and freedom in Asia. Gradually, China has been whittling down those liberties, including by suppressing the "Umbrella Movement" in 2014, refusing to allow direct elections for chief executive, kidnapping five Hong Kong booksellers and attempting to impose the extradition bill. When protests erupted over the extradition proposal, Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam should have immediately canceled it. Instead, Lam, more sensitive to the demands of her overlords in Beijing than to the values that underlie Hong Kong's success, tried to sidestep the issue with some obfuscation. It didn't work.

Another miscalculation was to assume that the protests would simply flare out. The protests are a political groundswell, a reflection of genuine popular anger and commitment to democracy. But authorities treated the protesters as "terrorists" and "rioters," a law enforcement problem to be handled by the Hong Kong police, who have repeatedly overreacted, including this weekend when they fired tear gas into a subway station and were discovered using undercover officers to infiltrate the demonstrators. In response, some protesters have turned more violent.

Yet another mistake of the Chinese authorities has been to roll out the boogeyman that the protests are inspired by foreigners. China's state media have trotted out the ghost that seems to frighten all authoritarians, calling the protests a "color revolution" instigated by the U.S. The charge speaks volumes about paranoia in the Communist Party that holds a monopoly on power in China. This protest movement is very much indigenous to Hong Kong and its people.

Lately, there have been dark hints of a stronger crackdown by the military. But repeating the catastrophe of Tiananmen Square would be counterproductive; hopefully China's leaders understand as much. They might be hoping to slowly strangle the protest movement without violence and without giving an inch. This would be another miscalculation because the demands of this summer won't go away.

The right answer for President Xi Jinping and for Lam, if she remains in office, is to open serious negotiations with the protesters on their demands, which are reasonable. Cinching the noose tighter, as the Chinese government has done in recent weeks, is the pathway to a dead end that could harm both Hong Kong and mainland China economically as well as politically.



Russia's deception worsened incident at its missile test site

The New York Times

Nearly as soon as an explosion ripped through the Nenoksa Missile Test Site in northern Russia on Aug. 8, briefly raising radiation levels in the region, the Kremlin went into crisis mode. That, to anyone familiar with the immediate aftermath of the Chernobyl accident, means clamping down on information, insisting that nothing really bad happened, that it happens everywhere and that the government is in full control.

This time, thank Heaven, the radiation leak appears not to have threatened residents in the region, and no increases were registered in neighboring Finland or Norway. But the pathetic, inchoate evasiveness of Russian authorities proved once again that the Kremlin is far more concerned with covering its behind than telling its people or the world what happened and how great the risk it carried.

When city authorities in nearby Severodvinsk reported the brief spike in radiation levels soon after the explosion, sending panicked people in search of iodine, which protects the thyroid gland against absorbing radiation, Moscow's reaction was to take the information off the city's website. Initial reports were only of a "liquid fueled rocket engine" blowing up, with assurances that such accidents were a normal risk in the important research that was underway and that such mishaps had occurred also in the U.S. and Japan. The five scientists who perished, Russians were informed, were heroes who would receive decorations and their families many rubles.

Oh, and yes, officials noted two days later, the scientists had been "involved in servicing isotope power sources on a liquid fuel engine." That was followed by a lot of scientific jargon (the research involved "the creation of sources of thermal or electric energy using radioactive materials, including fissile materials and radioisotope materials") but no concrete information about what the poor scientists — who according to some reports were flung into the White Sea by the blast — had been working on.

Sorting through what hints were available in the statements, U.S. intelligence officials said one project potentially involved in the blast was the development of a nuclear-powered cruise missile capable of evading American missile defenses on very long flights, known to NATO as the Skyfall and to Russia as the Burevestnik. President Vladimir Putin had bragged of such a weapon in his annual state of the nation address in 2018.

If that's what it was, the setback in the testing program would be a serious blow to Putin at a time he is facing weekly demonstrations in Moscow by tens of thousands of Russians irked by the exclusion of opposition politicians from the race for the Moscow City Council, and more broadly by the erosion of living standards.

The folly of the accelerating post-Soviet Cold War is a major issue in itself, as is Putin's illusion, carried over from the Soviet Union, that military might, however prohibitively costly and unnecessary, equals national greatness. Secrecy is critical to any arms race to keep the adversary off balance, and Moscow has always been obsessive about shrouding its military programs from view.

Yet the Kremlin should have understood with brutal clarity after Chernobyl that there can be no secrecy surrounding a nuclear accident, no matter how great or small, no matter how clandestine its source. Thousands of lives might have been saved at Chernobyl with prompt warnings.

Fortunately, the accident on the White Sea was no Chernobyl, and it will most likely pose no further threat to people's lives. And the real threat to Putin is that the government's instinctive lies and denials will only make the Russian public, and the world, even less likely to believe in anything Putin or his minions say or do when the next crisis hits.

Dems' 'election security' bill full of partisan provisions

The Wall Street Journal

The media's latest hot take is that Republicans — in particular the dastardly Sen. Mitch McConnell — are blocking bipartisan legislation to protect the nation's elections. Reality, as usual, is more complicated. Consider the Securing America's Federal Elections Act, or the Safe Act, which the Democratic House passed in June.

The core of the Safe Act is a pile of federal money, $600 million in the first year, to help states upgrade their voting systems. The bill would standardize and tighten election rules. All votes for federal office would have to be cast via paper ballots. A portion of this audit trail would then need to be manually checked for every election. Voting machines — presumably devices that assist in marking paper ballots — could not be manufactured outside the U.S. or connected to the internet.

Some of these ideas may have merit, but others have trade-offs. Running elections has been a state responsibility, and there are legitimate questions about further federalizing it. The Safe Act says post-election audits would be fully paid for by Washington — assuming Congress appropriated enough funds. If states think free money for new voting equipment is around the corner, they may quit upgrading themselves.

Paper ballots aren't perfect, as Florida has shown. Last year in Broward County thousands of voters didn't fill in the ovals for U.S. Senate, probably due to a poorly designed paper ballot that tucked this race beneath the panel with the voting instructions. If a recount means examining all paper ballots by hand, the Safe Act could slow final results.

The bill trots out liberal hobbyhorses. "All paper ballots used in an election for Federal office," it says, "shall be printed in the United States on recycled paper manufactured in the United States." Oklahoma's top elections official testified in June that given the sensitivity of his ballot scanners, "if we were required to use recycled paper, it would actually run the risk of causing false readings."

Republicans in the House tried to amend the Safe Act but were voted down. One suggestion was to delete the recycled paper provision. Another would have required "a 25% funding match from states, which would force states receiving funds to have their own skin-in-the-game," as Illinois Congressman Rodney Davis wrote.

When the Safe Act finally passed the House, a single Republican supported it. This allows the Senate's top Democrat, Chuck Schumer, to pitch the bill as "bipartisan." He recently asked to pass it by unanimous consent, as if it were immaculately conceived and impervious to debate. "There are only two inferences, neither good," Schumer said. "One is, the Republican side doesn't care about interference in our elections. And the other is, they want it because maybe they think it will benefit them."

Come on. This isn't a good-faith try at getting something done. It's a crude attempt to whack Republicans with a political club.

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Announcements 040

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- People saying Free Dog (different breeds) for adoption.

Automotive 140

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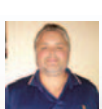
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2 SET UP LUNCH ACCOUNT WITH EXCHANGE

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- A 6-digit pin number will be assigned for your child to use to deduct the cost of meals, a la carte items & drinks.
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- MPP charges a 4.75% management fee for all deposits made online or on its mobile app.
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MORE SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM INFORMATION:
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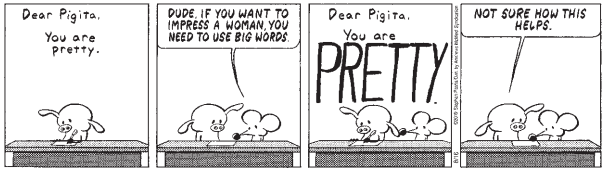
Frazz



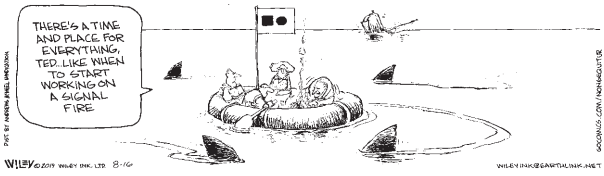
Dilbert



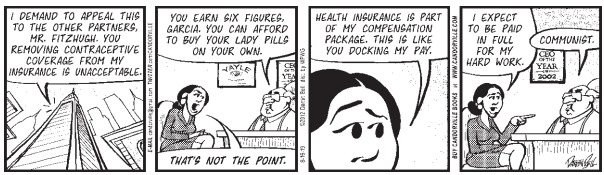
Pearls Before Swine



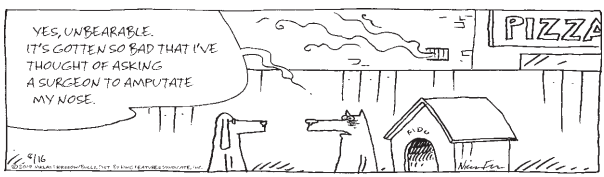
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



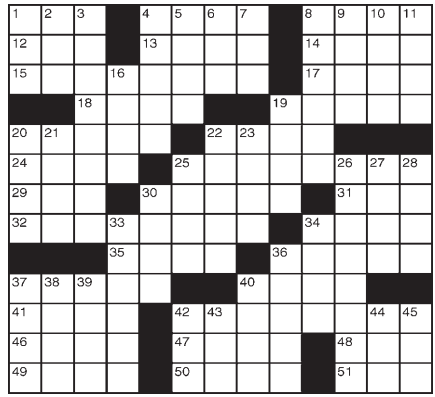
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

1 Luau bowlful
4 "Toodle-oo!"
8 Pharmaceutical
12 1040 org.
13 Slanted type (Abbr.)
14 "It can't be!"
15 Old Don Adams TV show
17 Floral rings
18 Lacked originality
19 "The Bell Jar" author
20 Single-celled organism
22 Nile queen, familiarly
24 Spheres
25 Like a barbershop quartet's harmony
29 Buckeyes' sch.
30 Pizza feature
31 Service charge
32 Fairway vehicle
34 Wilma's hubby
35 Joan of rock
36 Follows
37 Judean king
40 Pear type
41 — -friendly
42 Fruit pastry
46 Incursion
47 Ceremony
48 PBS funder
49 Metal boxes
50 Bigfoot's cousin
51 Jazz combo instrument

DOWN

1 Glutton
2 Mine yield
3 Turkey's most populous city
4 Used a stopwatch
5 Slightly
6 Roofing goo
7 Flight stat
8 Whipped cream serving
9 Ostrich kin
10 One
11 "Holy cow!"
16 Relaxing resorts
19 Impudent
20 Synthesizer pioneer
21 Guesser's words
22 Wimbledon arena
23 A deadly sin
25 Dorm alternative
26 Kenyans and Ethiopians
27 Stagger
28 Turner and Danson
30 Sent a dupe to
33 Norwegian inlets
34 Speedy
36 "Only You" actress Marisa
37 In pain
38 Actor Morales
39 Check
40 Cigar remnant
42 Snoop
43 Fib
44 Stephen of "Still Crazy"
45 Levy

Answer to Previous Puzzle

T	E	A	M		K	I	D		N	I	B	S
H	A	L	O		I	T	E		A	N	A	T
E	V	E	N		R	O	C		S	T	A	Y
M	E	X	I	C	O		E	S	A	U		
			K	E	V	I	N	K	L	I	N	E
R	O	D	E	O		D	C	I		T	O	N
I	T	O	R		H	E	Y		L	E	N	O
O	T	O		B	O	A		S	I	D	E	S
T	O	M	S	E	L	L	E	C	K			
		S	P	A	S		D	I	A	P	E	R
F	I	D	O		T	A	D		B	O	R	E
D	R	A	T		E	L	I		L	O	A	N
R	A	Y	S		R	A	E		E	L	S	E

8-16 CRYPTOQUIP

HX MTFHXN MTDO VTZPF, BQTI HF IQP APTFI TZNYXI JPNJAP TDP NCAHVTIPO IN CPI? ZHXHZYZ BTVPD.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IN MY BROTH RECIPE I REFUSE TO USE THAT HERB FROM A LAUREL TREE, CONTRARY TO POPULAR BAY LEAF.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals G

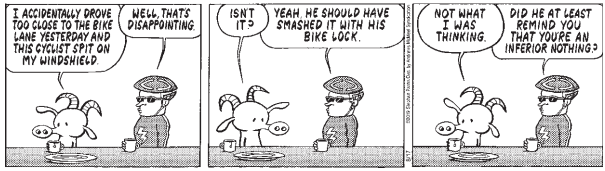
Frazz



Dilbert



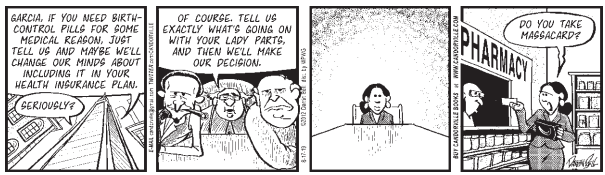
Pearls Before Swine



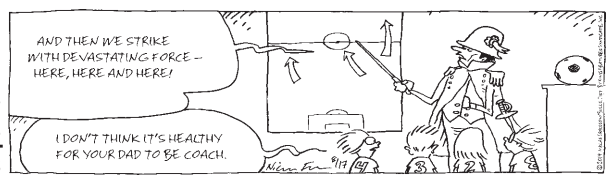
Non Sequitur



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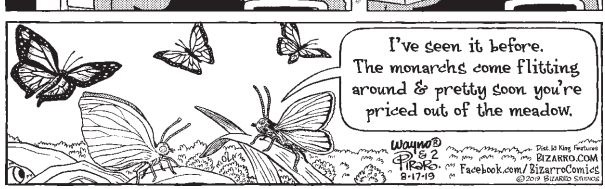
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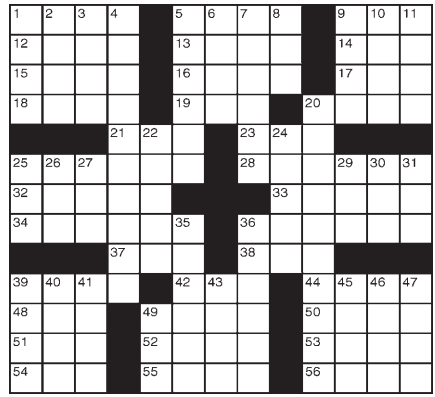
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

1 Swedish auto
5 Messes up
9 U.K. fliers
12 Catch sight of
13 Fly high
14 He gives a hoot
15 Mother of Zeus
16 Silver salmon
17 Motorist's org.
18 Office plant
19 Uganda's cont.
20 Cameo stone
21 Quick swim
23 New England cape
25 End of a threat
28 Jacuzzi
32 Cougars
33 "— Foolish Things"
34 Roil
36 Acquire canines
37 Solidify
38 Away from NNE
39 Region
42 Ordinal suffix
44 Own
48 I love (Lat.)
49 Hawaiian island
50 Last writes?
51 Math ratios
52 River to the Baltic
53 Low-fat
54 Farm pen
55 "Hey, you!"
56 Big name in scat

DOWN

1 Lowly worker
2 Tennis legend Arthur
3 Mimic
4 In general
5 Flee
6 Santa's runway
7 Gung-ho
8 "No seats" sign
9 Reddish horse
10 Vacationing
11 Linen source
20 In general
22 Edition
24 Musical symbols
25 Chances, for short
26 Boring routine
27 Brit. record label
29 Asian holiday
30 Show to a seat, slangily
31 Spell-off
35 Begs
36 Rock concert souvenir
39 Microwaves
40 Skip
41 Prying
43 Calendar abbr.
45 First victim
46 Test tube
47 Sicilian spouter
49 Swab the decks

Answer to Previous Puzzle

P	O	I			T	A	T	A			D	R	U	G
I	R	S			I	T	A	L			O	H	N	O
G	E	T	S	M	A	R	T				L	E	I	S
		A	P	E	D				P	L	A	T	H	
M	O	N	A	D		C	L	E	O					
O	R	B	S		F	O	U	R	P	A	R	T		
O	S	U		C	R	U	S	T			F	E	E	
G	O	L	F	C	A	R	T			F	R	E	D	
			J	E	T	T		T	A	I	L	S		
H	E	R	O	D			B	O	S	C				
U	S	E	R		P	L	U	M	T	A	R	T		
R	A	I	D		R	I	T	E		N	E	A		
T	I	N	S		Y	E	T	I		S	A	X		

8-17

CRYPTOQUIP

MN VSP PMFSVPPCVS FZPPW UPVVPZ SRI VE GP TEZC RX R QRZW EN XSRQP, MV TEBUI GP R XMFQR XVMFQR.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IN CASINO CARD GAMES, WHAT IS THE LEAST AMOUNT PEOPLE ARE OBLIGATED TO BET? MINIMUM WAGER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals T

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Tennis

Western & Southern Open

A U.S. Open Series event
Wednesday
At The Lindner Family Tennis Center
Mason, Ohio
Purse: ATP, $6.056 million (Masters 1000); WTA, $2.95 million (Premier)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor

Singles
Men
Second Round

Yoshihito Nishioka, Japan, def. Kei Nishikori (4), Japan, 7-6 (2), 6-4.
Alex de Minaur, Australia, def. Reilly Opelka, United States, 7-6 (3), 6-4.
Richard Gasquet, France, def. Federico Delbonis, Argentina, 7-5, 7-6 (1).
Daniil Medvedev (7), Russia, def. Benoit Paire, France, 7-6 (2), 6-1.
Jan-Lennard Struff, Germany, def. Stefanos Tsitsipas (3), Greece, 6-4, 6-7 (5), 7-6 (6).
Andrey Rublev, Russia, def. Stan Wawrinka (14), Switzerland, 6-4, 6-4.
David Goffin (13), Belgium, def. Guido Pella, Argentina, 6-4, 7-5.
Diego Sebastian Schwartzman, Argentina, def. Radu Albot, Moldova, 6-4, 6-2.
Adrian Mannarino, France, def. Mikhail Kukushkin, Kazakhstan, 6-1, 6-3.
Miomir Kecmanovic, Serbia, def. Alexander Zverev (5), Germany, 6-7 (4), 6-2, 6-4.
Lucas Pouille, France, def. Denis Shapovalov, Canada, 6-4, 6-4.
Roberto Bautista Agut (8), Spain def. Frances Tiafoe, United States, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1.
Karen Khachanov (6), Russia, def. Nick Kyrgios, Australia, 6-7 (3), 7-6 (4), 6-2.

Women
Second Round

Simona Halep (4), Romania, def. Ekaterina Alexandrova, Russia, 3-6, 7-5, 6-4.
Aryna Sabalenka (9), Belarus, def. Zheng Saisai, China, 6-4, 6-3.
Elina Svitolina (7), Ukraine, def. Elise Mertens, Belgium, 6-4, 6-1.
Rebecca Peterson, Sweden, def. Veronika Kudermetova, Russia, 2-6, 7-5, 6-2.
Karolina Pliskova (3), Czech Republic, def. Wang Yafan, China, 6-1, 6-3.
Donna Vekic, Croatia, def. Victoria Azarenka, Belarus, 6-2, 7-5.
Ash Barty (1), Australia, def. Maria Sharapova, Russia, 6-4, 6-1.
Anett Kontaveit, Estonia, def. Iga Swiatek, Poland, 6-4, 7-6 (2).
Hsieh Su-wei, Taiwan, def. Jennifer Brady, United States, 7-6 (9), 6-3.
Naomi Osaka (2), Japan, def. Aliaksandra Sasnovich, Belarus, 7-6 (3), 2-6, 6-2.
Madison Keys (16), United States, def. Daria Kasatkina, Russia, 6-4, 6-1.
Svetlana Kuznetsova, Russia, def. Dayana Yastremska, Ukraine, 4-6, 7-6 (7), 6-2.
Sofia Kenin, United States, def. Zarina Diyas, Kazakhstan, 6-4, 6-1.
Sloane Stephens (8), United States, def. Yulia Putintseva, Kazakhstan, 2-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Doubles
Men
First Round

Marcelo Demoliner, Brazil, and Daniil Medvedev, Russia, def. Robin Haase and Wesley Koolhof, Netherlands, 7-5, 1-6, 10-6.
Rohan Bopanna, India, and Denis Shapovalov, Canada, def. Rajeev Ram, United States, and Joe Salisbury, Britain, 7-6 (6), 7-5.

Second Round

Jamie Murray and Neal Skupski, Britain, def. Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Nicolas Mahut (5), France, 6-3, 6-3.
Raven Klaasen, South Africa, and Michael Venus (3), New Zealand, def. Austin Krajicek, United States, and Edouard Roger-Vasselin, France, 6-4, 6-4.
Ivan Dodig, Croatia, and Filip Polasek, Slovakia, def. Bob and Mike Bryan (8), United States, 6-4, 6-2.

Women
First Round

Bethanie Mattek-Sands and CoCo Vandeweghe, United States, def. Monique Adamczak, Australia, and Kaitlyn Christian, United States, 6-2, 6-3.
Anna-Lena Grönefeld, Germany, and Demi Schuurs (5), Netherlands, def. Kiki Bertens, Netherlands, and Donna Vekic, Croatia, walkover.
Caty McNally and Alison Riske, United States, def. Gabriela Dabrowski, Canada, and Xu Yifan (4), China, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 17-15
Alize Cornet and Kristina Mladenovic, France, def. Elise Mertens, Belgium, and Aryna Sabalenka, Belarus, 4-6, 6-2, 10-6.
Karolina and Kristyna Pliskova, Czech Republic, def. Nicole Melichar, United States, and Kveta Peschke (7), Czech Republic, 6-3, 7-6 (7).
Lucie Hradecka, Czech Republic, and Andreja Klepac (8), Slovenia def. Lyudmyla Kichenok, Ukraine, and Jelena Ostapenko, Latvia, 6-2, 6-3.
Hsieh Su-wei, Taiwan, and Barbora Strycova (1), Czech Republic, def. Anett Kontaveit, Estonia, and Maria Sakkari, Greece, 6-4, 6-3.
Barbora Krejcikova and Katerina Siniakova (3), Czech Republic, def. Jennifer Brady and Jessica Pegula, United States, 6-3, 5-7, 10-8.

Pro soccer

MLS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Philadelphia	13	7	6	45	40	38
Atlanta	13	9	3	42	43	30
D.C. United	10	7	9	39	34	32
New York City FC	10	5	8	38	41	31
New York	11	10	4	37	43	38
New England	9	9	7	34	37	44
Montreal	10	13	3	33	36	47
Orlando City	9	11	6	33	34	34
Toronto FC	9	10	6	33	39	41
Chicago	7	11	7	28	40	40
Columbus	7	14	5	26	27	39
Cincinnati	5	17	3	18	25	57

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Los Angeles FC	17	3	4	55	65	25
Minnesota United	12	8	5	41	43	35
LA Galaxy	13	11	1	40	33	36
Real Salt Lake	12	9	4	40	38	32
Seattle	11	8	6	39	38	37
San Jose	11	8	5	38	41	36
Portland	11	9	4	37	41	36
FC Dallas	10	10	6	36	36	33
Houston	9	13	3	30	35	41
Sporting KC	7	11	7	28	37	44
Colorado	7	13	3	24	26	41
Vancouver	5	12	9	24	26	45

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Wednesday's games

Orlando City 1, Sporting Kansas City 0
Minnesota United 4, Colorado 0
Real Salt Lake 3, Seattle 0
LA Galaxy 2, FC Dallas 0
Portland 3, Chicago 2

Saturday's games

New England at New York
FC Dallas at Montreal
New York City FC at Cincinnati
Toronto FC at Columbus
Orlando City at Minnesota United
Philadelphia at Chicago
San Jose at Sporting Kansas City
Colorado at Houston
D.C. United at Vancouver
Los Angeles FC at Real Salt Lake
Seattle at LA Galaxy

Sunday's game

Atlanta at Portland

Wednesday, Aug. 21

Columbus at New York City FC
New York at D.C. United
San Jose at Los Angeles FC

Thursday, Aug. 22

Minnesota United at Sporting Kansas City

Friday, Aug. 23

Atlanta at Orlando City
Seattle at Portland

Saturday, Aug. 24

New York at New York City FC
Chicago at New England
D.C. United at Philadelphia
Montreal at Toronto FC
Colorado at Real Salt Lake
Vancouver at San Jose

Wednesday
Orlando City SC 1, Sporting Kansas City 0

Kansas City	**0**	**0—0**
Orlando	**1**	**0—1**

First half—1, Orlando, Akindele, 9 (Ascues), 21st minute.
Goalies—Kansas City, Tim Melia, Eric Dick; Orlando, Brian Rowe, Adam Grinwis.
Yellow Cards—Orlando, Nani, 37th; Akindele, 49th. Kansas City, Gutierrez, 37th; Martins, 90th.
A—22,347.

Minnesota United 1, Rapids 0

Colorado	**0**	**0—0**
Minnesota	**1**	**0—1**

First half—1, Minnesota, Quintero, 8, 39th minute.
Goalies—Colorado, Clint Irwin, Andre Rawls; Minnesota, Vito Mannone, Dayne St. Clair.
Yellow Cards—Minnesota, Gasper, 60th; Boxall, 82nd. Colorado, Acosta, 45th.
A—19,629.

Real Salt Lake 3, Sounders 0

Seattle	**0**	**0—0**
Real Salt Lake	**1**	**2—3**

First half—1, Real Salt Lake, Johnson, 9, 25th minute.
Second half—2, Real Salt Lake, Rusnak, 9, 71st; 3, Real Salt Lake, Baird, 4, 87th.
Goalies—Seattle, Stefan Frei, Bryan Meredith; Real Salt Lake, Nick Rimando, Andrew Putna.
Yellow Cards—Real Salt Lake, Luiz, 52nd. Seattle, Jones, 70th.
A—17,825.

Galaxy 2, Dallas FC 0

Dallas	**0**	**0—0**
Los Angeles	**2**	**0—2**

Second half—1, Los Angeles, Ibrahimovic, 17 (Skjelvik), 68th minute; 2, Los Angeles, Ibrahimovic, 18 (penalty kick), 82nd.
Goalies—Dallas, Jesse Gonzalez, Jimmy Maurer; Los Angeles, David Bingham, Matt Lampson.
Yellow Cards—Los Angeles, Feltscher, 90th. Dallas, Acosta, 90th.
A—19,653.

Timbers 3, Fire 2

Chicago	**0**	**2—2**
Portland	**2**	**1—3**

First half—1, Portland, Moreira, 2, 11th minute; 2, Portland, Fernandez, 9 (Pardes), 21st.
Second half—3, Chicago, Nikolic, 9, 74th; 4, Portland, Fernandez, 10 (Conechny), 88th; 5, Chicago, Sapong, 10 (Frankowski), 90th.
Goalies—Chicago, David Ousted, Richard Sanchez; Portland, Steve Clark, Kendall McIntyre.
Yellow Cards—Portland, Loria, 27th; Ebobisse, 81st. Chicago, Calvo, 79th.
Red Cards—Chicago, Katai, 30th.
A—25,218.

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Portland	8	3	6	30	33	21
Chicago	9	6	2	29	28	21
North Carolina	8	4	4	28	31	17
Reign FC	7	4	5	26	15	18
Utah	7	6	3	24	17	15
Houston	6	7	4	22	17	26
Washington	6	6	3	21	19	15
Sky Blue FC	3	11	3	12	12	23
Orlando	3	10	2	11	16	32

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Sunday, Aug. 11

Portland 2, North Carolina 1
Utah 3, Reign FC 1

Wednesday's game

Sky Blue 2, Chicago 1

Saturday's games

Utah at Orlando
Washington at Portland

Sunday's game

Reign FC at Sky Blue FC

Youth baseball

Little League World Series

At South Williamsport, Pa.
UNITED STATES

NEW ENGLAND: Barrington (R.I.); MID-ATLANTIC: Elizabeth (N.J.); SOUTHEAST: South Riding (Va.); GREAT LAKES: Bowling Green (Ky.); MIDWEST: Coon Rapids (Minn.); SOUTHWEST: River Ridge (La.); NORTHWEST: Salem (Ore.); WEST: Wailuku (Hawaii).

INTERNATIONAL

ASIA/PACIFIC: South Chungcheong (South Korea); AUSTRALIA: Sydney; CANADA: Coquitlam (British Columbia); CARIBBEAN: Willemstad (Curacao); EUROPE/AFRICA: Bologna (Italy); JAPAN: Chofu City; LATIN AMERICA: Maracaibo (Venezuela); MEXICO, Guadalupe

Double Elimination
Thursday, Aug. 15

Game 1: Willemstad (Curacao) vs. Sydney (Australia)
Game 2: Barrington (R.I.) vs. South Riding (Va.)
Game 3: South Chungcheong (South Korea) vs. Maracaibo (Venezuela)
Game 4: Coon Rapids (Minn.) vs. Bowling Green (Ky.)

Friday, Aug. 16

Game 5: Bologna (Italy) vs. Chofu City (Japan)
Game 6: Wailuku (Hawaii) vs. River Ridge (La.)
Game 7: Guadalupe (Mexico) vs. Coquitlam (British Columbia)
Game 8: Salem (Ore.) vs. Elizabeth (N.J.)

Saturday, Aug. 17

Game 9: Game 1 loser vs. Game 3 loser
Game 10: Game 2 loser vs. Game 4 loser
Game 11: Game 5 loser vs. Game 7 loser
Game 12: Game 6 loser vs. Game 8 loser

Sunday, Aug. 18

Game 13: Game 1 winner vs. Game 3 winner
Game 14: Game 2 winner vs. Game 4 winner
Game 15: Game 5 winner vs. Game 7 winner
Game 16: Game 6 winner vs. Game 8 winner

Monday, Aug. 19

Game A: Game 9 loser vs. Game 10 loser
Game 17: Game 9 winner vs. Game 15 loser
Game 18: Game 10 winner vs. Game 16 loser
Game 19: Game 11 winner vs. Game 13 loser
Game 20: Game 12 winner vs. Game 14 loser

Tuesday, Aug. 20

Game B: Game 11 loser vs. Game 12 loser
Game 21: Game 17 winner vs. Game 19 winner
Game 22: Game 18 winner vs. Game 20 winner

Wednesday, Aug. 21

Game 23: Game 13 winner vs. Game 15 winner
Game 24: Game 14 winner vs. Game 16 winner

Thursday, Aug. 22

Game 25: Game 21 winner vs. Game 23 loser
Game 26: Game 22 winner vs. Game 24 loser

Saturday, Aug. 24

Game 27: Game 23 winner vs. Game 25 winner (International final)
Game 28: Game 24 winner vs. Game 26 winner (U.S. final)

Saturday, Aug. 24
Third Place

Game 29: Game 27 loser vs. Game 28 loser

Championship

Game 30: Game 27 winner vs. Game 28 winner

Pro football

NFL preseason

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
East						
Buffalo	1	0	0	1.000	24	16
New England	1	0	0	1.000	31	3
Miami	1	0	0	1.000	34	27
N.Y. Jets	0	1	0	.000	22	31
South						
Tennessee	1	0	0	1.000	27	10
Houston	0	1	0	.000	26	28
Indianapolis	0	1	0	.000	16	24
Jacksonville	0	1	0	.000	0	29
North						
Baltimore	1	0	0	1.000	29	0
Cleveland	1	0	0	1.000	30	10
Pittsburgh	1	0	0	1.000	30	28
Cincinnati	0	1	0	.000	17	38
West						
Kansas City	1	0	0	1.000	38	17
Oakland	1	0	0	1.000	14	3
Denver	1	0	0	.500	28	32
L.A. Chargers	0	1	0	.000	13	17

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
East						
N.Y. Giants	1	0	0	1.000	31	22
Dallas	1	0	0	1.000	9	17
Philadelphia	0	1	0	.000	10	27
Washington	0	1	0	.000	10	30
South						
Carolina	1	0	0	1.000	23	13
Tampa Bay	0	1	0	.000	28	30
Atlanta	0	2	0	.000	37	48
New Orleans	0	1	0	.000	25	34
North						
Minnesota	1	0	0	1.000	34	25
Green Bay	1	0	0	1.000	28	26
Chicago	0	1	0	.000	13	23
Detroit	0	1	0	.000	3	31
West						
San Francisco	1	0	0	1.000	17	9
Seattle	1	0	0	1.000	22	14
Arizona	1	0	0	1.000	17	13
L.A. Rams	0	1	0	.000	3	14

Thursday, Aug. 8

Buffalo 24, Indianapolis 16
Baltimore 29, Jacksonville 0
New England 31, Detroit 3
Cleveland 30, Washington 10
Tennessee 27, Philadelphia 10
Miami 34, Atlanta 27
N.Y. Giants 31, N.Y. Jets 22
Carolina 23, Chicago 13
Green Bay 28, Houston 26
Arizona 17, L.A. Chargers 13
Seattle 22, Denver 14

Friday, Aug. 9

Pittsburgh 30, Tampa Bay 28
Minnesota 34, New Orleans 25

Saturday, Aug. 10

Oakland 14, L.A. Rams 3
Kansas City 38, Cincinnati 17
San Francisco 17, Dallas 9

Thursday's games

Philadelphia at Jacksonville
Green Bay at Baltimore
N.Y. Jets at Atlanta
Cincinnati at Washington
Oakland at Arizona

Friday's games

Buffalo at Carolina
Chicago at N.Y. Giants
Miami at Tampa Bay

Saturday's games

Cleveland at Indianapolis
New England at Tennessee
Kansas City at Pittsburgh
Detroit at Houston
Dallas vs. Giants at Honolulu

Sunday's games

New Orleans at L.A. Chargers
Seattle at Minnesota

Monday, Aug. 19

San Francisco at Denver

NFL calendar

Aug. 29 — Final preseason games.
Aug. 31 — Cutdown to 53-player roster.
Sept. 5 — Regular season begins.
Oct. 15-16 — Fall league meeting, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
Oct. 29 — All trading ends for 2019 at 4 p.m. (ET)
Dec. 12 — League meeting, Las Colinas, Texas.

2020

Jan. 4-5 — Wild-card playoffs.
Jan. 11-12 — Divisional playoffs.

Pro basketball

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Washington	18	7	.720	—
Connecticut	17	8	.680	1
Chicago	14	10	.583	3½
Indiana	9	16	.360	9
New York	8	17	.320	9½
Atlanta	5	20	.200	13

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Las Vegas	17	9	.654	—
Los Angeles	15	9	.625	1
Seattle	14	12	.538	3
Minnesota	13	12	.520	3½
Phoenix	11	13	.458	5
Dallas	8	17	.320	8½

Wednesday's games

Washington 85, Seattle 59
Connecticut 78, Phoenix 71
Dallas 84, Los Angeles 78

Thursday's games

No games scheduled

Friday's games

Seattle at Connecticut
Los Angeles at Chicago
Washington at Minnesota
New York at Dallas
Atlanta at Phoenix

Saturday's games

No games scheduled

Deals

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL
American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Designated RHP Jimmy Yacabonis for assignment. Claimed RHP Ryan Eades off waivers from Milwaukee and optioned him to Norfolk (IL).

CLEVELAND INDIANS — Optioned LHP Josh Smith to Columbus (IL). Recalled LHP Logan Allen from Columbus. Sent RHPs Corey Kluber and Dan Otero and LHP Tyler Olson to Akron (EL) and OF Bradley Zimmer to the AZL Indians Red for rehab assignments.

DETROIT TIGERS — Optioned RHP John Schreiber to Toledo (IL). Recalled RHP David McKay from Toledo. Sent C Grayson Greiner to Lakeland (FSL) for a rehab assignment.

HOUSTON ASTROS — Optioned INF/OF Myles Straw and RHP Joe Biagini to Round Rock (PCL). Recalled RHP Cy Sneed from Round Rock.

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Optioned RHP Jake Jewell to Salt Lake (PCL). Reinstated RHP Nomar Ramirez from the 10-day IL.

NEW YORK YANKEES — Optioned LHP Joe Mantiply to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL). Designated RHP Brady Lail for assignment. Recalled 2B Thairo Estrada from Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. Claimed RHP Ryan Duffy off waivers from San Francisco and added him to the 40-man roster.

OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Optioned OF Nick Martini to Las Vegas (PCL). Designated C Beau Taylor for assignment. Selected the contract of INF Corban Joseph from Las Vegas.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Sent OFs Mitch Haniger and Braden Bishop to Modesto (Cal) for rehab assignments.

TAMPA BAY RAYS — Placed OF Avisail Garcia on the 10-day IL. Optioned RHP Austin Pruitt to Durham (IL). Reinstated LHP Jose Alvarado from the 10-day IL. Recalled RHP Ryan De Leon from Durham. Sent 2B Brandon Lowe to the GCL Rays for a rehab assignment.

National League

COLORADO ROCKIES — Optioned RHP Jeff Hoffman to Albuquerque (PCL). Recalled RHP Yency Almonte from Albuquerque.

MIAMI MARLINS — Sent 1B Neil Walker to Jupiter (FSL) for a rehab assignment.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Optioned RHP Jake Faria to San Antonio (PCL). Recalled RHP Corbin Burnes from San Antonio. Sent RHP Jimmy Nelson to San Antonio for a rehab assignment.

NEW METS — Placed INF Jeff McNeil on the 10-day IL. Selected the contract of INF Ruben Tejada from Syracuse (IL). Transferred RHP Jacob Rhame to the 60-day IL.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Sent RHP Jerad Eickhoff to Lehigh Valley (IL) for a rehab assignment. Signed C Nick Hundley to a minor league contract.

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Placed INF Pablo Sandoval on the 10-day IL, retroactive to Sunday. Reinstated OF Alex Dickerson from the 10-day IL.

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association

GOLDEN ST. WARRIORS — Named Matt Pitman public address announcer.

WASHINGTON WIZARDS — Named Antawn Jamison director of pro personnel and Laron Profit and John Carideo pro scouts.

FOOTBALL
National Football League

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Claimed DT Dare Odeyingbo off waivers from Tampa Bay.

NEW YORK GIANTS — Waived P Ryan Anderson. Claimed P Johnny Townsend off waivers from Oakland. Signed DB Terrell Sinkfield Jr.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS — Signed WR Emanuel Hall. Waived S Micah Abernathy.

HOCKEY
National Hockey League

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING — Traded F Adam Erne to Detroit for a 2020 fourth-round draft pick.

SOCCER
Major League Soccer

MLS — Added a second game to the one-game suspension of Minnesota F Mason Toye for spitting at an opponent.

HOUSTON DYNAMO — Fired coach Wilmer Cabrera. Appointed assistant coach Davy Arnaud to interim head coach for the remainder of the season.

National Women's Soccer League

NWSL — Added a second game to the one-game suspension of Orlando F Marta for unsportsmanlike conduct.

AP sportlight

Aug. 16

1920 — Cleveland shortstop Ray Chapman is hit in the head with a pitch by New York's Carl Mays. Chapman suffers a fractured skull and dies the next day. It's the only field fatality in major league history.

1966 — The first Sports Illustrated magazine is issued with a 25-cent price tag. The scene on the cover was a game at Milwaukee's County Stadium. Eddie Mathews of the Braves was swinging with Wes Westrum catching and Augie Donatelli umpiring.

1976 — Dave Stockton edges Raymond Floyd and Don January by one stroke to win his second PGA Championship. Stockton hits a par-saving 15-foot putt on the 72nd hole to finish with a 1-over 281 at Congressional Country Club (Blue Course) in Bethesda, Md.

AUTO RACING

Commentary

For excitement, Bristol needs more cage rattling

In the Pits

by JENNA FRYER • AP

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

It was 20 years ago when Dale Earnhardt Sr. spun Terry Labonte to win a Saturday night race at Bristol Motor Speedway.

Earnhardt was chasing the trophy — the playoffs didn't exist, no stages, no bonus points — and The Intimidator simply wanted the victory. Labonte had squeezed past Earnhardt to momentarily take the lead and Earnhardt immediately spun him out of his way.

The crowd at the packed Bristol bullring jeered Earnhardt's aggressive move, and the seven-time champion dismissed the criticism.

"Didn't mean to really turn him around, meant to rattle his cage, though," said an unapologetic Earnhardt.

Two decades later, there is so much more on the line as NASCAR returns to Bristol on the anniversary of one of the most famous finishes in series history. There are only three races left to make the playoffs and only nine drivers have locked in their slots. Jimmie Johnson is on the outside of the top 16, desperately trying to work his way into a chance to race for a record eighth championship.

As NASCAR looks back — fondly, no doubt — on that hot summer night showdown between a pair of Hall of Famers, perhaps there needs to be a whole lot more cage rattling at this stage of the season.

Bristol, particularly its August race around the 0.533-mile concrete, gladiator-style oval, was always one of the toughest tickets in NASCAR and boasted 55 consecutive sellouts from 1982 through 2010. The track accommodated 30,000 fans at the start of the streak, but expanded as most NASCAR promoters did during the 1990s to an obese 161,000 seats because fans were pouring through the gates in record numbers at venues across the country.

When the 2008 economic crisis began, and fans were no longer willing to pay inflated prices for hotels along the Tennessee/Virginia line, the crowd began to dwindle. The sellout streak ended two years later, Bristol's great Coliseum has removed roughly 20,000 seats since and the track didn't even bother selling tickets in the turns for the spring race in April. In a cruel twist, the Darrell Waltrip grandstand was closed on the same weekend the 12-time Bristol winner announced his retirement as Fox Sports' longtime analyst.

The cost of a weekend at Bristol — the get-in price on the track website Monday was $80 and lodging is typically $300 or more per night at nearby motels — has certainly harmed attendance for the former bucket list sporting event at a track that marketed itself as the site of a raging tempest where drivers could lose their cool and explode in anger. Jeff Gordon once shoved Matt Kenseth, Tony Stewart threw a helmet, middle fingers are the common form of communication and tempers are typically at the boiling point.

Of course, fans can argue the racing just isn't the same as it was in 1999 when Earnhardt used his bumper to win a race. First came alterations to the Bristol track surface. Then drivers became scared of upsetting a sponsor with bad behavior. NASCAR's rules package has since eliminated many of the opportunities for the bumping and banging that made the sport so popular.

Drivers also don't want the drama that comes with a feud. Johnson and Ryan Blaney found themselves embroiled in a weeklong saga after the two made contact two races ago, Johnson felt Blaney showed a lack of respect, and Blaney didn't back down from his position. It took a conversation over beers to smooth things out between the two, but it was a headache neither wanted as they jockey for berths in the 16-driver playoff field.

Problem is, NASCAR needs rivalries and controversies and drivers willing to rattle a cage to get a win.



EARL NEIKIRK, BRISTOL HERALD COURIER/AP

NASCAR driver Tony Stewart throws his helmet at Matt Kenseth's car after the two collided during a Sprint Cup Series race on Aug. 25, 2012 at Bristol Motor Speedway in Bristol, Tenn. The track forever marketed itself as a raging tempest for drivers to lose their cool and explode in aggressive anger.



AP

Ross Chastain celebrates in victory lane after winning a NASCAR Truck Series race on July 27 in Long Pond, Pa. Chastain, Brett Moffitt, Austin Hill, Johnny Sauter, Stewart Friesen, Tyler Ankrum, Grant Enfinger and Matt Crafton are competing in the playoffs.

Chastain takes aim at Truck Series title

BY JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — This was supposed to be the breakout year for Ross Chastain, whose hard work caught the eye of a sponsor who promised to fund the eighth-generation watermelon farmer in the best ride of his career.

Chastain was moving up to a competitive car in the Xfinity Series with a true chance to compete for the championship in NASCAR's second-tier series.

Then the sponsor was raided in December by the federal government and the deal vanished. Chip Ganassi had to shut down his Xfinity program and Chastain had less than two months to scrape together work for this season.

The saga didn't end there. He got a full Truck Series schedule with Niece Motorsports but declared in his NASCAR paperwork that he was racing for the championship in the Xfinity Series, all while trying to add elite Cup Series races to his schedule.

But when he won at Kansas Speedway in the seventh Truck Series race of the season, Chastain made the unprecedented decision to change course and register as a candidate for that championship.

"There were a lot of sleepless nights," Chastain said this week. "I made my own choice, the decision was mine, but it did start out of our control. I didn't make the first decision that set this in motion. There came a point in (Xfinity) where we just weren't going to be competitive. We just felt like we were getting punched in the nose over and over."

The swap to race for the championship in NASCAR's third-tier national series has turned out to be the best decision Chastain could make in this roller-coaster year. The 26-year-old Florida native is considered one of the favorites to win the title when the playoffs began Thursday night at Bristol Motor Speedway.

The eight-driver field was led by regular-season winner Grant Enfinger, reigning series champion Brett Moffitt, two-time series champion Matt Crafton and 2016 champion Johnny Sauter. It was rounded out by Stewart Friesen, winner of his first career race two weeks ago on the dirt at Eldora Speedway; Austin Hill, who in sponsorship gamesmanship got Moffitt's ride after Moffitt won the title; rookie Tyler Ankrum; and Chastain.

Ankrum missed the first three races of the season because he didn't turn 18 until March, but he earned a slot in the playoffs with a surprise victory at Kentucky. It's not lost on him how far he has come in 13 races at the national level.

"Honestly, I didn't even have the confidence in myself to even win a stage," when he debuted, said Ankrum. "So the fact I am here now is surreal."

Chastain leads all playoff drivers with three wins this season. But his statistics are more complicated than the numbers indicate.

When he decided to run for the Truck Series title, he was starting at zero with no points and his Kansas victory did not count in qualifying for the postseason. But just two races later, he won at Iowa, only to become the first driver to be disqualified under NASCAR's zero tolerance policy on failing post-race inspection.

Chastain answered a week later with a victory at Gateway, and led all but six laps in a dominating win at Pocono.

Moffitt won the season finale last year to claim his first national title, and believes that will be how the title is decided again this year.

"Whoever wins Homestead is going to win the championship, if you make it that far, you are going to have to win that race," Moffitt said. "Ross, he's been fast all year and proven he can win and is getting it done."

MLB

Tribe posts major league turnaround

Cleveland erases 11½-game deficit to contend again

By Tom Withers
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The Indians' clubhouse is buzzing with activity about three hours before a three-game series opener against the defending World Series champion Boston Red Sox, whose season could be over by October.

For a stretch, Cleveland's postseason plans were in serious doubt.

As players kill time before the first pitch, several relievers recline in black leather chairs at their cubicles, scanning phones while right-hander Tyler Clippard closes his eyes and grabs a quick nap on one of the large couches nearby.

Looking for a fight, third baseman Jose Ramirez, who is finally swinging the bat like an All-Star again, barrels out of the shower area and shouts at rookie outfielder Oscar Mercado, who rolls his eyes.

It's business as usual. Nothing out of place.

And, according to All-Star MVP Shane Bieber, that's the key behind the Indians' stunning turnaround this season — same routine, consistency, treat every day and every game just like the one before it.

"Except, today, I just put on gray pants," Bieber said with a laugh before stripping down and grabbing the home whites.

Bieber's wardrobe mishap aside, the Indians are doing most everything right these days.

After going through the motions for much of April and May, they've been baseball's best team for more than the past two months, playing .694 ball (43-19) since June 4 while chipping away at Minnesota's 11½-game lead to move back into a race for first place in the AL Central that could go down to the wire.

After a 5-1 loss at home to Boston on Wednesday, the Indians next face a tough test — a four-game series at Yankee Stadium against a New York team that has the best record in the AL.

Under manager Terry Francona's skilled touch, the Indians have made their climb back to contention despite a slew of injuries to the team's strongest area — the pitching staff.

Two-time Cy Young winner Corey Kluber has been out since May 1 after having his right arm broken by a line drive during a start at Miami, and steady starter Carlos Carrasco, a 17-game winner in 2018, was diagnosed in June with a treatable form of leukemia.

Mike Clevinger missed two months with a back injury that initially threatened his season, and All-Star shortstop Francisco Lindor sat out the first 19 games with an ankle injury that still affects him.



Photos by Tony Dejak/AP

All-Star shortstop Francisco Lindor of the Cleveland Indians, who is hitting .303, missed the Indians' first 19 games with an ankle injury.



After a slow start, Cleveland Indians third baseman Jose Ramirez has been hitting more than .300 since June 21 with 39 RBIs.

There have been other issues, including Ramirez's mysterious slump that seems solved and a blockbuster trade at the July deadline when the Indians' front office pushed all in for the season by dealing Trevor Bauer, the club's best pitcher in stretches, to Cincinnati in a three-team deal that brought back sluggers Yasiel Puig and Franmil Reyes.

It's been bumpy, unconventional (rookie pitchers Zach Plesac and Aaron Civale have made quality starts) and dramatic. But the Indians, whose 71-year World Series drought is the majors' longest, are now thriving.

"It's been a total team effort, and by total I mean even part of our Triple-A," Francona said.

"It feels right," said Bieber, the polished 24-year-old who has grown from impressive rookie to Cy Young candidate in just two seasons. "I feel like this is exactly what we thought we were capable of, and we know this is kind of our brand of baseball and it's nice to be able to put this together and put this little run together."

Ramirez was batting around .200 until mid-June and looked lost at the plate. Since then, the third baseman who finished third in MVP voting the past two seasons has been on a tear.

Ramirez has batted well over .300 since June 21 with 19 doubles, 12 homers and 39 RBIs, and returned to being the one batter in the lineup pitchers least want to face in a big spot.

Indians fans are once again serenading him with "Jose, Jose, Jose" chants each time he digs into the batter's box at Progressive Field.

"He's a great player," said Francona, who loyally supported Ramirez during his slump. "He just got caught up in some bad habits hitting and it took him a while."

His two-month comeback isn't the only turnaround as Carlos Santana, who left as a free agent after an eight-year stay in Cleveland only to be re-acquired in a trade, has been the Indians' steadiest hitter.

Since returning to Cleveland — "my sweet home" — he has become an American citizen, a first-time All-Star and delivered in the clutch. After closer Brad Hand blew a save on Sunday, Santana hit a grand slam in the 10th inning to give the Indians a win at Minnesota, pushing them into a first-place tie.

The next night, he homered leading off the ninth to give Cleveland a 6-5 victory as the Indians leapfrogged the Twins to lead the division for the first time since April 19.

"There's never a doubt when we're down a run or two, even three," Plesac said afterward. "Our offense is so good, you feel confident that we're going to come back."

The next day, the Indians' clubhouse looks and feels the same.

Hand and Nick Goody are locked in a serious pingpong match while Ramirez, perhaps baseball's best Mario Kart player, convinces Clippard to take him on in the popular video game.

While left-hander Oliver Perez shuffles a deck of cards nearby, Bieber's getting dressed for the game.

He's got the correct pants this time.

Scoreboard

American League

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	81	41	.664	—
Tampa Bay	71	51	.582	10
Boston	64	59	.520	17½
Toronto	51	73	.411	31
Baltimore	39	82	.322	41½
Central Division				
Minnesota	72	48	.600	—
Cleveland	72	49	.595	½
Chicago	54	65	.454	17½
Kansas City	43	78	.355	29½
Detroit	36	81	.308	34½
West Division				
Houston	78	43	.645	—
Oakland	68	52	.567	9½
Texas	60	60	.500	17½
Los Angeles	59	63	.484	19½
Seattle	49	72	.405	29

National League

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	72	50	.590	—
Washington	65	55	.542	6
Philadelphia	62	58	.517	9
New York	61	59	.508	10
Miami	44	75	.370	26½
Central Division				
St. Louis	63	55	.534	—
Chicago	64	56	.533	—
Milwaukee	63	58	.521	1½
Cincinnati	56	63	.471	7½
Pittsburgh	50	70	.417	14
West Division				
Los Angeles	81	41	.664	—
Arizona	61	60	.504	19½
San Francisco	60	61	.496	20½
San Diego	56	64	.467	24
Colorado	54	67	.446	26½

Wednesday's games

Texas 7, Toronto 3
N.Y. Yankees 6, Baltimore 5
Boston 5, Cleveland 1
Chicago White Sox 13, Houston 9
Detroit 3, Seattle 2
L.A. Angels 7, Pittsburgh 4
Milwaukee 6, Minnesota 5
Colorado 7, Arizona 6
San Diego 7, Tampa Bay 2
Oakland 9, San Francisco 5
Washington 17, Cincinnati 7
Philadelphia 11, Chicago Cubs 1
L.A. Dodgers 9, Miami 1
Atlanta 6, N.Y. Mets 4
L.A. Angels 7, Pittsburgh 4
St. Louis 6, Kansas City 0

Thursday's games

Seattle at Detroit
Cleveland at N.Y. Yankees
Minnesota at Texas
Chicago White Sox at L.A. Angels
Houston at Oakland
L.A. Dodgers at Miami
Chicago Cubs at Philadelphia
St. Louis at Cincinnati
N.Y. Mets at Atlanta
San Francisco at Arizona

Friday's games

Cleveland (Civale 1-1) at N.Y. Yankees (Tanaka 8-6)
Seattle (TBD) at Toronto (Waguespack 3-1)
Baltimore (Brooks 2-6) at Boston (Porcello 10-9)
Detroit (TBD) at Tampa Bay (Morton 13-4)
Minnesota (TBD) at Texas (Minor 11-6)
Chicago White Sox (Giolito 12-6) at L.A. Angels (Sandoval 0-0)
Houston (Verlander 15-4) at Oakland (Roark 7-8)
Chicago Cubs (TBD) at Pittsburgh (Musgrove 8-11)
Milwaukee (Houser 5-5) at Washington (Corbin 9-5)
San Diego (Paddack 7-5) at Philadelphia (Velasquez 4-7)
St. Louis (Wainwright 8-8) at Cincinnati (Castillo 11-4)
L.A. Dodgers (TBD) at Atlanta (Soroka 10-2)
N.Y. Mets (Syndergaard 8-5) at Kansas City (Montgomery 2-5)
Miami (Alacantara 4-10) at Colorado (Gray 10-8)
San Francisco (Samardzija 9-9) at Arizona (Leake 9-9)

Saturday's games

Cleveland at N.Y. Yankees
Seattle at Toronto
Houston at Oakland
Detroit at Tampa Bay
Baltimore at Boston
Minnesota at Texas
Chicago White Sox at L.A. Angels
Philadelphia at San Francisco
Atlanta at Miami
Chicago Cubs at Cincinnati
Texas at Milwaukee
Washington at N.Y. Mets
Pittsburgh at St. Louis
Colorado at San Diego
Arizona at L.A. Dodgers

Sunday's games

San Diego at Philadelphia
Baltimore at Boston
Cleveland at N.Y. Yankees
Seattle at Toronto
St. Louis at Cincinnati
Detroit at Tampa Bay
L.A. Dodgers at Atlanta
Milwaukee at Washington
N.Y. Mets at Kansas City
Minnesota at Texas
Miami at Colorado
Houston at Oakland
Chicago White Sox at L.A. Angels
San Francisco at Arizona
Chicago at Pittsburgh



DAVE ORNAUER/Stars and Stripes

Guam quarterback Travon Jacobs scrambles during Thursday's combined scrimmage with Kubasaki, Nile C. Kinnick and Yokota.

Four-team combine shakes up start of two-a-day practices

BY DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Two-a-day football practices have begun for most DODEA Pacific schools and four teams decided to do something a bit different this season.

Guam, Kubasaki of Okinawa and Nile C. Kinnick and host Yokota of Japan spent Tuesday through Thursday drilling players on conditioning, fundamentals and play execution. The camp finished with a 90-minute scrimmage.

"You start football camp six weeks before the season, and after a while, you get sick of just hitting your teammates" in practice, said coach Dan Joley of defending Far East Division I champion Kinnick. "You want to see what else is going on out there."

Each school brought at least 12 players to the combine, along with multiple members of the teams' coaching staffs.

DODEA Pacific did not fund the camp nor the travel to it, but gave the combine its blessing, Joley said.

DODEA Pacific fall sports teams were authorized to begin practices Aug. 4. Some waited until this week.

The genesis of the camp took place in March, when the coaches from the teams participated in the Tomodachi Bowl friendship game at Naval Air Facility Atsugi.

"We talked about this there and said it didn't make sense for us not to do it," Guam coach Jacob Dowdell said. "We've gotten more quality reps up here in these last few days than we will all season on Guam."

Coach Fred Bales, in his final season at Kubasaki's helm, called the gathering and what his players took from it "extraordinary."

"You're learning, you're making new friends, you're expanding your vision moving forward, not just about football or school, but about life," Bales said. "This was a super-positive experience for the players, and the professional development for the coaches is huge."

Kinnick quarterback Patrick Kelly, a senior, had done something similar with his teammates three seasons ago when Kinnick, American School In Japan, Zama and Yokota did a one-day combine.

The highlight of the week was the scrimmage, which featured the teams largely mixing rosters. There was even something of a crowd on hand; about 50 people, mostly players' parents, were in the stands to watch.

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Popovich stressing the importance of bonding

Team USA must jell quickly ahead of FIBA World Cup

BY TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. — USA Basketball coach Gregg Popovich doesn't have many rules for his World Cup team. They're more like suggestions, such as the one about limiting phone usage when the team is having breakfast together.

He doesn't mind if guys are talking.

He just wants them talking to one another.

Part of the challenge the U.S. faces in the road to this FIBA World Cup — the tournament opener for the Americans in Shanghai against the Czech Republic is just a little over two weeks away — is taking individuals who know one another and turning them into a real team. It's been a top priority for Popovich since the national team assembled for camp last week, and players say they feel bonds being forged.

"We've got the group text going already," Milwaukee's Khris Middleton said. "Practices, we're constantly talking to each other. The bus rides, the breakfast meetings when there's no phones, just getting to know each other to see what they're all about, see how they are, just get to know them."

So off-court matters are coming together.

The on-court product is still a work in progress.

The World Cup candidates played a team of mostly G League players in practice scrimmages on Wednesday and struggled mightily, losing one of those short games 36-17. The first real dress rehearsal for the Americans in advance of the tournament comes Friday night in Anaheim against Spain.

Results in practice shouldn't be read into that much, and for what it's worth Popovich wasn't exactly putting his team on blast afterward.

"Every day's an opportunity to work on execution and put a year's worth of business into a couple of weeks," Popovich said. "Every day's a little bit better."

Brooklyn's Joe Harris said facing adversity in camp will only help the Americans when adversity strikes for real when games count in China.

"This is where you figure it out," Harris said. "You don't want everything to be seamless right now. These are the moments right now in practice where you want it to be difficult, take your licks a little bit, and figure it out. It's making us come together. You can't do it alone and this is helping us become a collective unit."



ERIK VERDUZCO, LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL/AP

Guard Pat Connaughton goes up for a shot against pressure from guard Joe Harris, right, during the first half of the U.S. men's basketball team's scrimmage in Las Vegas last Friday.

The team had the weekend off after an intrasquad scrimmage in Las Vegas last Friday, then reassembled at the Los Angeles Lakers' practice facility on Tuesday. If the Americans — the two-time defending World Cup champions — make the gold medal game in Beijing on Sept. 15, that means Tuesday was the start of 34 consecutive days together for a group currently composed of 15 players from 10 different NBA franchises. The roster will be pared to 12 before the World Cup begins.

A lot of players knew each other relatively well before last week, but Popovich wants them to get very close very fast.

"I agree with Pop," Boston's Kemba Walker said. "Cell phones, you don't need them, not all the time. There's definitely time to be on your cell phones but now, right now, in the situation that we're in we have to gain some camaraderie pretty fast."

For his part, Walker thinks that camaraderie is building.

"We just have a bunch of high-character guys, hungry guys, guys who want to be here and guys who want to win," Walker said. "So, yes, it's been easy for us to get along."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

SEC loaded with veteran quarterbacks

Who are the best of the rest besides Fromm, Tagovailoa?

BY JOHN ZENOR
Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala.

It is the year of the veteran quarterback in the Southeastern Conference.

Tua Tagovailoa and Jake Fromm are the headliners, but the league is loaded with experienced passers with double-digit starts under their belts at their current school or elsewhere.

The SEC has eight returning starters at quarterback and could have as many as five graduate transfers leading offenses. The teams are hoping that's a recipe for success in a league that hasn't produced a first-round pick at quarterback since Johnny Manziel in 2014.

"I think it's unique that you would have five graduate transfer quarterbacks possibly starting in our conference, and it's also a really good year for the quarterback in the SEC," said Kirby Smart, Fromm's coach at Georgia. "It seems in my experience having been in the SEC for a lot of years, whether as a coach or a player, I don't know that there's been a year where there's been so many quarterbacks that have the experience they have.

> **'Joe's very tough. Joe's going to lead by example. His team believes in him. We expect him to have a great year.'**
>
> **Ed Orgeron**
> LSU coach, on his QB, Joe Burrow

"Some of them may not have the experience at that university, but they have experience. That's usually not a good sign for defensive coordinators in our conference. ... It makes it really tough because that position determines a lot of the outcomes of games. That's your leader and the guy that touches the ball every play."

There's little true star power beyond Fromm and Alabama's Tagovailoa, the Heisman Trophy runner-up last season. Either or both could snap that first-round QB drought for a league that routinely sends a bounty of talent into the NFL at other positions. Both are also surrounded by talented playmakers and blockers.

Florida's Feleipe Franks, LSU's Joe Burrow and Kentucky's Terry Wilson all are back after helping lead their teams to 10-win seasons.

South Carolina's Jake Bentley has started 32 games over the past three seasons. Texas A&M's Kellen Mond (20 starts) and Tennessee's Jarrett Guarantano (18) have started in multiple seasons, as well.

Even most of the teams with new starters have seasoned vets, though Auburn and Mississippi will be starting freshmen.

The biggest name among the new guys is Missouri's Kelly Bryant, who led Clemson to the national championship game two seasons ago. Bryant started 18 games but left after losing the starting job to talented freshman Trevor Lawrence.

His presence greatly eases the worries about replacing four-year starter Drew Lock. Even South Carolina coach Will Muschamp, who faced Bryant at Clemson, predicts "a very smooth transition." Muschamp praised Bryant's accuracy and mobility.

"But I probably think his best attributes as a player is his intangible qualities," Muschamp said. "The guy is an outstanding leader. He positively affects people around him. He gets guys going and believing in what you need to do to be successful."

At Arkansas, graduate transfer Ben Hicks was a three-year starter at SMU while Nick Starkel is a former Texas A&M starter.

Vanderbilt has Riley Neal, who passed for 7,393 yards and 46 touchdowns over three seasons at Ball State.

Mississippi State grad transfer Tommy Stevens spent two seasons under coach Joe Moorhead at Penn State. He's battling Keytaon Thompson for the starting job.

LSU's Burrow started last year as a grad transfer from Ohio State. He finished a solid debut season with 394 passing yards and four touchdowns in a Fiesta Bowl win over Central Florida.

He's the first LSU quarterback to pass for 2,500-plus yards and rush for at least 350 in the same season. LSU coach Ed Orgeron expects to free him up for more runs this season.

"He reminds me of Bobby Hebert, a quarterback that I played with who was a tremendous football player that had all of the intangibles of a leader," Orgeron said. "Joe's very tough. Joe's going to lead by example. His team believes in him. We expect him to have a great year."





BRAD MCCLENNY, THE GAINESVILLE SUN, ABOVE, AND JEFF ROBERSON, BELOW/AP

Above: Florida coach Dan Mullen, left, watches as quarterback Feleipe Franks runs with the ball during practice in Gainesville, Fla. Below: Missouri quarterback Kelly Bryant brings a wealth of experience after transferring from Clemson.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Tennessee wideouts eager to deliver for Martin

Championship-winning Vols QB returns to alma mater as wide recievers coach

BY STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Tennessee's wide receivers savor the opportunity to play for their new position coach because they appreciate what Tee Martin accomplished during his own playing career.

Martin was the starting quarterback on Tennessee's 1998 national championship team and is back at his alma mater coaching wideouts as the Volunteers attempt to become competitive again in the Southeastern Conference.



Martin

"He's been where we want to get," senior Brandon Johnson said. "I get to look at the man who did that every day. We can look at him and just kind of follow his mold, and we know he's not lying because he's done it before."

Martin remains an enormously popular figure at Tennessee, where he has a street on campus named in his honor. He began coaching soon after his professional playing career ended in 2005 but never quite expected this opportunity.

"I didn't think I would ever come back (to Tennessee) to coach," Martin said. "The way it worked out was cool, the way it worked out. I think it's the right time."

Tennessee offered Martin a soft landing after he was fired as Southern California's offensive coordinator at the end of the 2018 season. During his coaching career, he has worked with eventual NFL receivers JuJu Smith-Schuster, Nelson Agholor, Marqise Lee, Robert Woods and Randall Cobb.

He now takes over perhaps the most experienced position group of Tennessee's roster. Those receivers must produce more explosive plays for Tennessee to bounce back from two straight losing seasons in which the Vols have ranked last in the Southeastern Conference in yards per game.

For many of them, this year represents their last chance to make the type of impact they expected to deliver upon their arrival. Seniors on the receiving corps include Marquez Callaway, Jauan Jennings, Tyler Byrd and Johnson.

"I try not to think about that, but obviously I know this is my last camp," Callaway said. "This is it for me at the college level. I'm just trying to take it all in and try to go out every day so I won't have any regrets."

Callaway is Tennessee's top returning receiver and has prompted Martin to note that he "has a skill set very similar to" Smith-Schuster, a former All-America receiver at USC who earned a Pro Bowl invitation with the Steelers last season.

"I think he has the potential to be one of the best receivers in the SEC," Martin said. "I'm not just saying that because he's here at Tennessee. His body of work to this point speaks for itself. If he just continues to take his game to the next level, I think he could be one of those early round guys."



WADE PAYNE/AP

Tennessee wide receiver Jauan Jennings, right, is congratulated by fellow receiver Marquez Callaway after scoring a touchdown against UTEP last season in Knoxville, Tenn. The Volunteers wide receivers savor the opportunity to play for their new position coach because they appreciate what Tee Martin accomplished during his own playing career — Martin was the starting quarterback on Tennessee's 1998 national championship team and is back at his alma mater trying to help the Vols become competitive again.

Future: Falcons' Johnson assembling impressive résumé, on and off the field

FROM BACK PAGE

About the future: He's got his path carefully mapped out to accomplish his goal of becoming a top figure in the world of intelligence by the time he's in his 50s.

Over the summer he worked with C4ADS, a nonprofit think tank in Washington that provides data-driven analysis on global conflict and security issues. On its website the company said it uses "cutting-edge technologies to manage, integrate, and analyze disparate data from diverse languages, regions, and sources, incorporating our own field research from conflict zones and fragile states."

Johnson couldn't get into specifics about his role with C4ADS given the sensitive or classified nature of various projects. He did write a dossier that just might wind up in the hands of an intelligence agency.

Now that sure would look good on a graduate-school application.

A standout student, he's considering a list of grad schools that includes Oxford, Georgetown, Harvard and MIT. Johnson wants to earn a master's degree in international relations.

Then, it's on to special forces training to fulfill his military duties. Maybe through the Air Force or possibly a cross-commission program with the Army Green Berets or Navy SEALs.

"There's a clear pipeline to the intelligence agency especially from the officer corps," said Johnson, who completed a language immersion program a summer ago and was on the cadet leadership team during survival training. "There's a lot of ways to make the world a better place. In the short term, reducing and subtracting negatives is probably the most efficient. When my body can no longer support the lifestyle of an operator, I can move on to using what God's given me up here (his head) and make an even bigger impact."

Hence, his designs on going into the intelligence field.

"I'm hoping to bring a moral purpose and a modern perspective," Johnson said.

He couldn't disclose more of his vision than that. Not because it's classified, but because it's actually part of his grad-school essay.

There's one thing that could put his plans on temporary hold — a chance in the NFL. President Donald Trump recently said he is looking into offering a waiver that would allow athletes attending the nation's military academies to play professional sports immediately upon graduation. Under the current framework, athletes have to serve two years of active duty before applying for reserve status to pursue a career in professional sports.

"If I play really well, of course I'd love to have that opportunity," Johnson said. "But that's selfish. More than me, I'm part of a team. That's bigger than what I am. My commitment is to be the best football player I can right now for them."

Johnson is coming off a season in which he was second on the team in tackles (70) and tackles for loss (7½). He also returned an interception 32 yards for a TD against Stony Brook.

"Kyle is a character," friend and defensive back Jeremy Fejedelem said. "He's always high-energy and a super-athletic football player. You can expect a lot of big things out of Kyle."



DOUGAL BROWNLIE, THE GAZETTE/AP

Navy quarterback Garret Lewis is pressured by Falcons linebacker Kyle Johnson last October at Air Force Academy, Colo. Johnson spent the summer interning at a think tank in Washington that provides data-driven analysis on global conflict.

NFL

Spanish surprise

Arcega-Whiteside making strong first impression

By Rob Maaddi
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — J.J. Arcega-Whiteside is already a trailblazer before catching his first touchdown pass.

Arcega-Whiteside became the first player born in Spain drafted in the NFL when the Philadelphia Eagles selected him with the 57th overall pick in the second round in April.

"It's awesome," Arcega-Whiteside said. "It's a huge honor obviously to be the first and hopefully not the last, and to help any way that I can to keep pushing people to learn about the sport, enjoy the sport, play the sport."

The talented wide receiver has strong athletic genes. His mother, Valerie Whiteside, set many school records as a basketball player at Appalachian State. His father, Joaquin Arcega, played several years in Europe. They met while playing professionally in Spain and later moved to Portugal to play when their son was 3 years old. Two of Joaquin's uncles also played pro basketball and represented Spain in the 1984 Olympics.

Arcega-Whiteside's family moved to South Carolina when he was 7. He was already a standout in soccer and began to excel in track and basketball in the United States. Once he started playing football, he dominated that sport, too.

"It's tough for any kid moving when they're young because you have to make new friends," Arcega-Whiteside said. "Not only that, but you have to learn a new culture, and not really learning a new language but be able to use a different language on a daily basis with different people. So it was tough at first, but it ended up being the best decision we've ever made."

Arcega-Whiteside speaks three languages: Spanish, English and Portuguese. Though he's been in America for 15 years, he still has a strong connection with his family in Spain.

"I talk to them almost every other day," he said. "I connect with them a lot. They're professional athletes as well. They give me a lot of advice."

Arcega-Whiteside said he chose football over basketball early on in high school after catching a winning touchdown pass.

"I was like, there's no feeling in basketball that's going to compare to this," he said.



Matt Rourke/AP

Eagles wide receiver J.J. Arcega-Whiteside catches a pass during training camp in Philadelphia. Arcega-Whiteside became the first player born in Spain drafted in the NFL when the Eagles selected him with the 57th overall pick in the second round in April.

The 6-foot-3, 225-pound Arcega-Whiteside led Stanford with 63 catches for 1,059 yards and 14 touchdowns as a junior. He was a surprise selection by the Eagles because they were stacked at wide receiver after bringing DeSean Jackson back to Philadelphia to join Alshon Jeffery and Nelson Agholor.

Offensive coordinator Mike Groh has been impressed with the young receiver in training camp. He had two catches for 23 yards in Philadelphia's preseason opener last week.

"I think that he's been able to come in and learn and pick up what we do," Groh said. "From that standpoint, very few errors. Now that he has that foundation, he can build from a technical standpoint each and every day."

Arcega-Whiteside isn't the only Spaniard in the NFL. Pittsburgh Steelers left tackle Alejandro Villanueva's parents are from Spain, but he was born on a Naval Air Station in Mississippi. Villanueva went to Army and was originally signed by the Eagles as an undrafted free agent in 2014.

Fitzpatrick back competing, sharing knowledge in Miami

By Fred Goodall
Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — It didn't take Ryan Fitzpatrick long to get reacclimated to a familiar setting.

The journeyman quarterback who's preparing for his 15th NFL season, is back on the practice fields at the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' training facility this week, this time competing for a starting job with the Miami Dolphins.

Fitzpatrick spent the past two seasons with the Bucs, mostly as a backup to 2015 No. 1 overall draft pick Jameis Winston.

With the Dolphins, he's trying to beat out second-year pro Josh Rosen, another young passer hoping to prove he's a franchise QB.

"Being on eight teams, this has happened more than once, where I've gotten to go back," Fitzpatrick said of this homecoming for a pair of joint workouts leading to Friday night's preseason game between his last two employers.



Brynn Anderson/AP

Dolphins quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick throws during last week's preseason game against the Atlanta Falcons in Miami Gardens, Fla.

"It's really cool. man. Just him being back here in Tampa," Winston said Wednesday. "He's a funloving guy ... a great leader."

Fitzpatrick also was a big help to the Bucs' quarterback, generously sharing knowledge and experience gleaned from a meandering career that also includes stops with the Rams, Bengals, Bills, Titans, Texans and Jets.

Now, he's doing the same with Miami, even though he and Rosen are competing for the starting job.

Coach Brian Flores has declared Fitzpatrick the leader in the competition, however Rosen may be closing the gap after directing three scoring drives in last week's preseason opener and getting some work with the Dolphins' No. 1 offense in joint practices against Tampa Bay.

Rosen said Fitzpatrick has been "unbelievably helpful ... probably one of the best mentors I've had in the sport."

"I think I have a sort of special skillset, so that when I can put those two together, it can be special," the young quarterback added. "But it's going to be a long road, a lot of film, a lot of studying, and I'm just indebted to Fitz for how selfless he's being."

As far as Fitzpatrick is concerned, it's part of the job.

He became the first player in NFL history to throw for more than 400 yards in three consecutive games, leading Tampa Bay to a 2-1 start last season while Winston was serving a suspension for violating the NFL's personal conduct policy.

Winston was inconsistent when he returned, briefly losing the starting job before regaining it and playing well enough down the stretch that the Bucs brought him back for the final year of his rookie contract at a salary of nearly $21 million.

"I think last year was a difficult situation for a lot of different reasons; but I also look at the way he played down the stretch and he played some really good football," Fitzpatrick said about his decision to sign with Miami in the offseason.

"For me at least, football is a lot more fun when I'm out there playing," he added. "Having the opportunity to go to Miami and compete, that's why I decided to do what I did."

NFL



TONY AVELAR/AP

San Francisco 49ers quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo threw interceptions on five straight pass attempts at practice Wednesday, his worst session in his return from the torn ACL that cut short his 2018 season.

49ers' Garoppolo sputters in tuneup before first real test

BY JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Jimmy Garoppolo had a practice to forget in his final session before facing an opposing defense for the first time since suffering a season-ending knee injury in September.

Garoppolo threw interceptions on five straight pass attempts at practice for the San Francisco 49ers on Wednesday, by far his worst session since his return from the torn ACL that cut short his 2018 season after three games.

"I was the defensive coach today so I was pumped," coach Kyle Shanahan said. "The defense did great today. Obviously, he struggled. You hope to never have a day like that. But I don't think it's never not happened to anyone. When you do that, you hope you can practice long enough and you have a chance to play out of it."

Garoppolo's day went off the rails when safety Jaquiski Tartt intercepted a pass that was tipped by linebacker Kwon Alexander. Free safety Tarvarius Moore added two more interceptions, cornerback Richard Sherman jumped in front of tight end Ross Dwelley for one of his own and cornerback Ahkello Witherspoon had one in the end zone on an attempt to Dante Pettis.

Garoppolo settled down a bit after that and did lead a two-minute drill into the red zone before Tartt nearly came up with another interception on the final play, only to have it go through his hands to Jordan Matthews for a completion short of the goal line.

Shanahan said he hopes a practice like this will be a learning experience for Garoppolo on how to deal with frustration in games.

"You want so badly to make it up the next play but the next play you still have to make the right decision and go with what the defense gives you," Shanahan said. "Sometimes it's hard to make the right decisions when you're fired up and competitive. Usually when you make a bad play, it makes your mind go a little bit sideways. That's why it is sometimes a good situation to put guys in and when that does happen sometimes you try to protect them a little bit in the game. But in practice it's the exact opposite. When there's an issue, you kind of poke at it a little bit more and see how guys react."

Garoppolo will get a chance to rebound when the 49ers hold joint practices with the Denver Broncos on Friday and Saturday in preparation for an exhibition game. This will be Garoppolo's first time facing an opposing defense since injuring his knee in Kansas City last Sept. 23. He will also get a chance to play in the game on Monday night.

> **'Obviously, he struggled. You hope to never have a day like that. But I don't think it's never not happened to anyone. When you do that, you hope you can practice long enough and you have a chance to play out of it.'**
>
> **Kyle Shanahan**
> 49ers coach on quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo

The one bright spot in Garoppolo's poor performance was that it showed that maybe the 49ers will have a more opportunistic defense this season after setting NFL records for futility with just two interceptions and seven takeaways all last season.

San Francisco goes into the joint practices a bit short-handed, especially on the defensive line, where starting defensive ends Dee Ford and Nick Bosa remain sidelined. Ford (knee tendinitis) could return to practice next week for the first time since July 30.

Bosa had a severe ankle injury last week and his status for the season opener remains in doubt. Bosa worked out on the side Wednesday in an encouraging sign that he is making progress.

Defensive coordinator Robert Saleh said making this missed time even more crucial is the fact that the team is implementing new techniques on the defensive line under coach Kris Kocurek.

"That stuff, to me, is important," Saleh said. "Do I think it will hinder us from still being able to get after the passer? No, I don't think it will be too bad. I feel like there's going to be an adjustment. … We're going to have a high celling once those guys get back of trying to master those techniques and master the relationship they have with one another so they can operate at a very high level.

Kitna, back in Dallas, looks to mentor Prescott

BY SCHUYLER DIXON
Associated Press

OXNARD, Calif. — Jon Kitna unfolded a piece of paper detailing that day's practice plan because he thought it was a good way to illustrate why the former Dallas quarterback was back in the NFL with the Cowboys after coaching high school football for seven years.

Dak Prescott's new position coach never stopped communicating with Jason Garrett, who replaced the fired Wade Phillips as head coach while Kitna was starting for an injured Tony Romo halfway through a lost season in 2010. Now Kitna is on the staff of a man he calls a mentor — even though Garrett is only seven years older.

"Like, literally, I could bring one of my coaches here from the last seven years and I could hand them this, and they'd know exactly what this is and how it works and what we're doing," Kitna said as he held out the paper. "He gave me all that stuff."

When Garrett and the Cowboys were dealing with another Romo injury and needed an emergency backup for a 2013 regular-season finale with a playoff berth on the line, Kitna traveled from Washington state, where he was coaching his high school alma mater, to wear the headset for one Sunday.

A year later, Kitna returned to Texas as coach at Waxahachie High School, just south of Dallas. After three years there, he coached at a private school in Arizona before the Cowboys promoted Kellen Moore to offensive coordinator after just one year as QB coach.

Re-enter Kitna, whose playing career overlapped with Garrett's for almost a decade — although they were never teammates — before Garrett became his offensive coordinator in Dallas.

"At that time, I always said to myself at some point he is going to stop playing," Garrett said. "At some point we got to get him back on board. He's got great knowledge of the game. He's got a great way to connect with people. The way he interacts with players. The way he interacts with coaches."

Garrett's been known to say many of the same things about Prescott after two NFC East titles in three seasons, along with NFL Rookie of the Year honors in 2016, when he led Dallas to a franchise-record 11-game winning streak.

Kitna is coming along at an important time, the 46-year-old looking like the perfect complement for someone exactly 20 years younger.

Prescott keeps coming back to footwork when asked how he thinks Kitna is going to make him better.

"He does a great job of staying on top of us every practice, going in the film room and making sure we touch up on it, as well," Prescott said. "I'm seeing the improvement. It feels great."

Kitna went from coaching teenagers to a two-time Pro Bowler looking for answers on how to get past the divisional playoffs after losing in that round twice.

The difference wasn't lost on a former player who never made the Pro Bowl, had a losing record (54-70), lost both his playoff starts and threw almost as many interceptions (165) as touchdowns (169).

"The thing I had to get over was, and it was quick, 'I have something to offer,'" Kitna said, chuckling at the memory of showing up with Garrett's staff at the Pro Bowl before the Cowboys had announced his hiring, feeling as if "the staff doesn't even know who you are."



MICHAEL AINSWORTH/AP

Dallas Cowboys quarterbacks coach Jon Kitna, left, with Dak Prescott, is back in the NFL with one of his former teams after coaching high school football for seven years.

NFL

Without Gordon, Bolts turn to Ekeler, Jackson

By Joe Reedy
Associated Press

COSTA MESA, Calif. — As Melvin Gordon continues his holdout from the Los Angeles Chargers' training camp, Justin Jackson and Austin Ekeler are showing why they should be in the mix to get more carries this season.

Both running backs have made a strong impression on coaches during the three weeks of practices as well as last Thursday's preseason opener against Arizona.

They will figure prominently as Los Angeles hosts New Orleans for joint workouts Thursday and Friday and then a game Sunday.

"I mean, even if he was here, we have the same mentality," Ekeler said. "If he's here, we still have to move forward. If he's not here, we still have to move forward."



Photos by Rick Scuteri/AP

The Los Angeles Chargers are taking a longer look at running backs Austin Ekeler, above, and Justin Jackson, below, as starter Melvin Gordon continues his holdout.

Ekeler ran for 40 yards on five carries during the Arizona game. Jackson gained 22 yards on five carries, scoring from 4 yards out on the Chargers' second drive.

"They've done a good job of taking advantage of their opportunities," offensive coordinator Ken Whisenhunt said. "I thought that they ran strong (last Thursday), made good decisions on their cuts and did a good job in protection. It was very nice to see the way they played."

Ekeler's role continues to expand as he enters his third season. The 5-foot-10, 200-pound Ekeler has emerged as a shifty change-of-pace back who is dangerous catching the ball out of the backfield. He is the first undrafted player in franchise history to have a rushing and receiving TD in each of his first two years.

Ekeler's six receiving touchdowns also make him the first undrafted running back with five or more in his first two years since Dallas' Dan Reeves in 1966.

Ekeler said he is still receiving the same amount of reps that he would get if Gordon was on the field. He said the biggest difference is that he is getting more with the first team.

Jackson was a seventh-round pick last year but missed most of training camp with a hamstring injury. He started the season on the practice squad before being called up to the active roster before Week 4.

When Gordon was out for four games with a knee injury, Jackson ended up getting his opportunity. He had an 18-yard touchdown at Pittsburgh and gained 58 yards with a TD in a start at Kansas City.

The 6-0, 199-pound Jackson showed how much growth he's had during the offseason on his touchdown against Arizona. He was able to lower his shoulders and powered through for the score.

Running backs coach Alfredo Roberts said that run showed the game isn't too big for him.

"We're both trying to carve out our space in this offense, especially with Melvin not being here," said Jackson. "We're trying to step up and work off each other. You have to plan for Austin's speed and my change of direction."

There aren't any signs that Gordon will end his holdout soon. He is in the final year of his rookie contract and is slated to earn $5.6 million this season. Gordon has gained more than 1,200 yards from scrimmage and scored 10 or more touchdowns in three straight seasons.





Mark Humphrey/AP

Tennessee Titans cornerback Malcolm Butler, left, a former new England Patriot, defends against Patriots wide receiver Phillip Dorsett during a joint practice Wednesday in Nashville, Tenn.

Pats, Titans talk trash in practice

By Teresa M. Walker
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Patriots' rookies surprised Titans coach Mike Vrabel at the start of their joint practice by serenading him for his 44th birthday.

Vrabel knows who likely instigated the singing.

"That was something that was unexpected but very appreciated," Vrabel said Wednesday. "It was a good idea by whoever came up with it. Probably Tom or Bill."

That would be either former teammate Tom Brady or Bill Belichick, the coach Vrabel won three Super Bowl rings with as a linebacker during his 14-year career. Now Vrabel is in his second season as head coach with the Tennessee Titans hosting Belichick and the Patriots for two days of practices before Saturday night's preseason game.

> **'It was a lot of fun. We have a lot of respect for those guys. We can learn a lot from the way they practice and how they operate.'**
>
> **Mike Vrabel**
> Titans coach, commenting on the Patriots

This session featured lots of trash talking and felt much more like a family reunion than an NFL training camp with all the ties between these franchises.

Vrabel started the talk as soon as Brady came onto the field, yelling at the three-time NFL MVP for walking and not jogging onto the field. Brady told Vrabel to pay attention to his own work in just the start of the barking between teams with lots of ties and former players now on the other roster.

The Titans coach stayed close to his defense working against Brady, all the better for the two to chirp at each other.

"It brought back a lot of memories just to be able to sit out there and they make a play and he turns around and says, 'Mikey you better cover that. You guys need to do this.' I'm sure I had plenty to say too," Vrabel said. "It was a lot of fun. We have a lot of respect for those guys. We can learn a lot from the way they practice and how they operate."

Cornerbacks Logan Ryan and Malcolm Butler and running back Dion Lewis all won Super Bowl rings with the Patriots before signing with Tennessee as free agents. Patriots cornerback Jason McCourty never played in the postseason through eight years with the Titans before finally joining his twin brother, Devin, in the New England secondary last season.

Ryan jumped up trying to knock down a Brady pass from his old teammate only to get knocked down by Patriots right tackle Marcus Cannon.

"It's all good," Ryan said. "We're competing. Tom said that he'll know every time I'm blitzing because he knows my mannerisms. I think I tricked him on one."

Brady got the better of a Titans defense Wednesday that was sixth against the pass and third in fewest points allowed. Ryan said Brady dominates in a practice setting where defenders can't use all their tricks.

"When you're on top, he's going to throw it low," Ryan said. "You're in front, he's going to throw it behind. I mean if you can't get pressure on him and sack him like we can't do in practice, he's going to be pretty accurate. But we just want to be on body and we want to be close and challenge those receivers."

The Titans made clear they want their version of the Patriot Way when general manager Jon Robinson, who got his NFL start with the Patriots, hired Vrabel as their new coach in January 2018.

NFL

Cook sets goal of finding niche

Saints' scheme opens possibilities

By Brett Martel
Associated Press

METAIRIE, La. — First-year Saints tight end Jared Cook won't take his apparent good fit with record-setting quarterback Drew Brees and New Orleans' prolific offense for granted.

After a decade in the NFL that often fell short of expectations — particularly in Green Bay with star QB Aaron Rodgers in 2016 — Cook has decided that the degree to which he succeeds begins with his own determination to master the scheme in which he plays and his effort to cultivate a strong rapport with his quarterback.

"It's all about the preparation. The more you go into a game plan knowing what to do, knowing what your quarterback is going to check to or tell you before he even says it, I think the preparation in that aspect gives you a step above the competition," said Cook, who arrived in New Orleans this offseason after signing a two-year, $15 million contract.

"It's your preparation that's going to get you a little extra open," Cook said. "That's going to make the difference between a 1-yard contested catch or 5-yard separation, wide open. So it's just how I approach the game, how I go about it, how I'm learning. I think that's more important on your growth and it's on you. It starts with you first."

With a 6-foot-5, 254-pound frame, relatively good speed and reliable hands, Cook has been viewed as a tight end with a lot of upside since the Tennessee Titans took him in the third round of the 2009 draft out of South Carolina.

But it wasn't until last season — his 10th in the NFL — that he made his first Pro Bowl with Oakland after posting career highs of 68 catches for 896 yards and six touchdowns. Last season also happened to mark Jon Gruden's return to coaching with the Raiders. Not surprisingly, Saints coach Sean Payton noticed.

Payton began his NFL coaching career in 1997 as an offensive assistant in Philadelphia, where Gruden was the offensive coordinator at the time. While Payton has evolved in the two decades since, he still sees common threads his and Gruden's offensive philosophies.

"I cut my teeth a little bit offensively in his system," Payton said. "Jon is extremely talented in putting together a plan. Just the installation, the consistency with how you teach and what you do with your players.

"We're different, but yet there's some similarities," Payton continued. "We'll watch and study their film and look for ideas."

Or in Cook's case, a player who was about to enter free agency in the same year he'd found a role in which he could thrive.

"There's a little bit of: Is it the right script for success?" Payton said, making a comparison to the film industry. "There's been a lot of real good actors in poor movies and there've been a lot of poor actors in poor movies. I think it is up to us to really look closely at the things that he does well and feature those things."

Brees-to-Cook connections, often 15 to 20 yards down field, have become commonplace during the first few weeks of training camp.

"One thing you see with Cook is his stature," Payton said. "A lot of times you'll talk about a big target and there is a confidence level when you throw it to someone who's that tall and who's got really good hands. So they've been able to make some good plays."

The Saints hope Cook will make opponents pay for blanketing leading receiver Michael Thomas with double teams and shadowing running back Alvin Kamara, who also has been a prime target in the short passing game.

"At the end of the day, you can't double all those guys," Brees said. "Defenses are going to try to mix it up and at times are going to take some chances. And when they do, you're ready for it and you try to take advantage."



Gerald Herbert/AP

After a decade in the NFL that often fell short of expectations — particularly in Green Bay with star quarterback Aaron Rodgers in 2016 — new Saints tight end Jared Cook has decided that the degree to which he succeeds begins with his own determination to master the scheme in which he plays.

Barkley OK sitting out Giants' preseason games

By Tom Canavan
Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J.

Saquon Barkley has no problem watching preseason games from the sidelines, if that's what New York Giants coach Pat Shurmur wants.

The NFL offensive rookie of the year last season was in uniform but was a spectator and cheerleader for the Giants' 31-22 victory over the Jets on Thursday.

Speaking to the media Monday after practice, Barkley shrugged off his role as a nonparticipant. He is getting a lot of work every day in practice. He's been a halfback long enough to know how to run the ball. And he certainly doesn't need to get hit to get ready for the season opener at Dallas on Sept. 8.

If last season is any indication, the 2018 second pick overall is going to be hit around 400 times this season. He carried the ball 261 times for 1,307 yards and was targeted for passes 121 times, catching 91. That's 382 times he was a target and doesn't take into account either the times he has to block or when he is hit while carrying out a fake.

Still, Barkley would not object to playing in the preseason.

"If you know anything about me, or if you ask my teammates, I love the game of football," the Penn State product said. "Any opportunity that you get to play. Every single day we stop, and we mention, especially in the RB group, how big of a blessing it is to come out here and play the sport that you love."

Barkley spoke to Shurmur after being told he was not going to play in the opener and was told there is a plan. Neither he nor Shurmur discussed it.

"I'll let it reveal itself," Shurmur said.

Barkley missed most of preseason last year after straining a hamstring in the opener.

"Do I think I need it? I think it depends on the player," Barkley said. "Every year is different. Am I ready if I have to? Yes, my mindset every week is to prepare to get ready to go out there and compete at a high level for my team, no matter if it's one snap, two series, one quarter or if I don't play. If I don't play, I stay locked in and try to be the leader that I can to keep the energy and the vibes good on the sideline."

Barkley showed his energy level on Thursday running down the sideline to congratulate rookie quarterback Daniel Jones and receiver Bennie Fowler after a touchdown pass.

Barkley laughed at the idea he needs to get hit to be ready for the season.

"Yeah, I don't think anyone needs to be hit. I think if everyone could choose not to get hit until Week 1 they would choose that," he said. "But you are right, some people like to get that first contact, like to get that first hit. But for me, I'm the type of player that no matter if it is preseason, playoffs or the regular season, once that first play goes and I get hit, I'm fine."

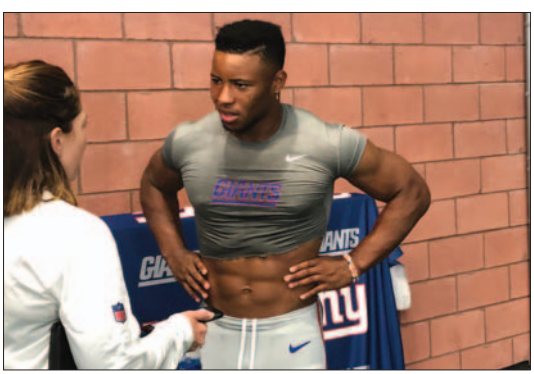
The Giants have had Barkley lined up as somewhat of a wide receiver on some plays recently. The hope is to match him against a linebacker or safety in open space.

It would be an interesting wrinkle this season, with Odell Beckham Jr. now playing in Cleveland.

However, Barkley is a running back first.

Second-year left guard Will Hernandez said the line is going to do its job whether Barkley is carrying the ball or it's Wayne Gallman, Paul Perkins or any other back.

"We always come out and we give it our all, it doesn't matter what back we've got back there," Hernandez said. "Obviously, Saquon makes things a little bit easier sometimes."



Tom Canavan/AP

Rrunning back Saquon Barkley says he's fine with sitting out all the Gaints' preseason games, but insists he'll be ready for the season opener against the Cowboys.

SPORTS

Back in the mix
After slow start, Indians in tight race for AL Central crown » Page 56

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Man with a plan

Hard-hitting Air Force LB Johnson has future all mapped out

By Pat Graham
Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. Air Force senior linebacker Kyle Johnson did some mapping and data collecting during his confidential summer internship at a think tank in the nation's capital.

Sorry, that's really all he can reveal. His work was either sensitive or classified.

He does have clearance to divulge his long-term game plan: Attend graduate school, go through special forces training and down the road become a leader in the intelligence community.

More immediately, and considerably less hush-hush, Johnson wants to lead the Falcons back to a bowl game. The secret's certainly out on Air Force's hard-hitting, ball-hawking inside linebacker who runs like a safety.

"On a scale of 1 to 10, he's a 100 in terms of being an alert and instinctive football player," Air Force coach Troy Calhoun said. "He is focused and he is driven."

An apt description — focused on the now and driven toward the future.

About the now: The 6-foot, 225-pound Johnson's mind is strictly on Colgate in the season opener on Aug. 31 at Falcon Stadium. It's the first step in bouncing back after two consecutive 5-7 seasons. The Falcons are predicted to finish third in the Mountain division of the Mountain West.

"As far as pure talent goes, this is the best team we've had since I've been here," said Johnson, a management major/Spanish minor from Jacksonville, Fla. "It's all about how we capitalize and use that potential."

SEE FUTURE ON PAGE 59



Air Force senior linebacker Kyle Johnson
Dougal Brownlie, The Colorado Springs Gazette/AP

TE Cook hopes to find fit with Saints, Brees » Page 63

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